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WERNER,

A TRAGEDY.

TO

THE ILLUSTRIOUS GOËTHE,

BY ONE OF HIS HUMBLEST ADMIRERS,

THIS TRAGEDY

IS DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

The following drama is taken entirely from the "*German's Tale, Kruitzner,*" published many years ago in "*Lee's Canterbury Tales;*" written (I believe) by two sisters, of whom one furnished only this story and another, both of which are considered superior to the remainder of the collection. I have adopted the characters, plan, and even the language, of many parts of this story. Some of the characters are modified or altered, a few of the names changed, and one character (Ida of Stralenheim) added by myself: but in the rest the original is chiefly followed. When I was young (about fourteen, I think) I first read this tale, which made a deep impression upon me; and may, indeed, be said to contain the germ of much that I have since written. I am not sure that it ever was very popular; or at any rate its popularity has

since been eclipsed by that of other great writers in the same department. But I have generally found that those who *had* read it, agreed with me in their estimate of the singular power of mind and conception which it developes. I should also add *conception*, rather than execution; for the story might, perhaps, have been more developed with greater advantage. Amongst those whose opinions agreed with mine upon this story, I could mention some very high names; but it is not necessary, nor indeed of any use; for every one must judge according to their own feelings. I merely refer the reader to the original story, that he may see to what extent I have borrowed from it; and am not unwilling that he should find much greater pleasure in perusing it than the drama which founded upon its contents.

I had begun a drama upon this tale so far back as 1815 (the first I ever attempted, except one thirteen years old, called "*Ulric and Ilvina* which I had sense enough to burn), and had nearly completed an act, when I was interrupted by circumstances. This is somewhere amongst my p

pers in England; but as it has not been found, I have re-written the first, and added the subsequent acts.

The whole is neither intended, nor in any shape adapted, for the stage.

February, 1822.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Werner.
Ulric.
Stralenheim.
Idenstein.
Gabor.
Fritz.
Henrick.
Eric.
Arnheim.
Meister.
Rodolph.
Ludwig.

WOMEN.

Josephine.
Ida Stralenheim.

Scene—partly on the frontier of Silesia, and partly in Siegendorf Castle, near Prague.

Time—the close of the thirty years' war.

WERNER;

OR,

THE INHERITANCE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The Hall of a decayed Palace near a small Town on the northern Frontier of Silesia—the Night tempestuous.

WERNER *and* JOSEPHINE *his wife.*

JOSEPHINE.

My love, be calmer!

WERNER.

I am calm.

JOSEPHINE.

To me—

Yes, but not to thyself: thy pace is hurried,

And no one walks a chamber like to ours
With steps like thine when his heart is at rest.
Were it a garden, I should deem thee happy,
And stepping with the bee from flower to flower;
But *here!*

WERNER.

'Tis chill; the tapestry lets through
The wind to which it waves: my blood is frozen.

JOSEPHINE.

Ah, no!

WERNER (*smiling*).

Why! wouldst thou have it so?

JOSEPHINE.

I would
Have it a healthful current.

WERNER.

Let it flow
Until 'tis spilt or check'd—how soon, I care not.

JOSEPHINE.

And am I nothing in thy heart?

WERNER.

All—all.

JOSEPHINE.

Then canst thou wish for that which must break mine?

WERNER (*approaching her slowly*).

But for *thee* I had been—no matter what,
But much of good and evil; what I am,
Thou knowest; what I might or should have been,
Thou knowest not: but still I love thee, nor
Shall aught divide us.

[WERNER *walks on abruptly, and then approaches* JOSEPHINE.

The storm of the night,
Perhaps, affects me; I'm a thing of feelings,
And have of late been sickly, as, alas!
Thou know'st by sufferings more than mine, my love!
In watching me.

JOSEPHINE.

To see thee well is much—
To see thee happy——

WERNER.

Where hast thou seen such?
Let me be wretched with the rest!

JOSEPHINE.

But think
How many in this hour of tempest shiver

Beneath the biting wind and heavy rain,
Whose every drop bows them down nearer earth,
Which hath no chamber for them save beneath
Her surface.

WERNER.

And that's not the worst: who cares
For chambers? rest is all. The wretches whom
Thou namest—ay, the wind howls round them, and
The dull and dropping rain saps in their bones
The creeping marrow. I have been a soldier,
A hunter, and a traveller, and am
A beggar, and should know the thing thou talk'st of.

JOSEPHINE.

And art thou not now shelter'd from them all?

WERNER.

Yes. And from these alone.

JOSEPHINE.

And that is something.

WERNER.

True—to a peasant.

JOSEPHINE.

Should the nobly born

Be thankless for that refuge which their habits
Of early delicacy render more
Needful than to the peasant, when the ebb
Of fortune leaves them on the shoals of life?

WERNER.

It is not that, thou know'st it is not; we
Have borne all this, I'll not say patiently,
Except in thee—but we have borne it.

JOSEPHINE.

Well?

WERNER.

Something beyond our outward sufferings (though
These were enough to gnaw into our souls)
Hath stung me oft, and, more than ever, *now*.
When, but for this untoward sickness, which
Seized me upon this desolate frontier, and
Hath wasted not alone my strength, but means,
And leaves us,—no! this is beyond me!—but
For this I had been happy—*thou* been happy—
The splendour of my rank sustain'd—my name—
My father's name—been still upheld; and, more
Than those——

JOSEPHINE (*abruptly*).

My son—our son—our Ulric,

Been clasp'd again in these long empty arms,
And all a mother's hunger satisfied.
Twelve years! he was but eight then:—beautiful
He was, and beautiful he must be now.
My Ulric! my adored!

WERNER.

I have been full oft
The chase of fortune; now she hath o'ertaken
My spirit where it cannot turn at bay,—
Sick, poor, and lonely.

JOSEPHINE.

Lonely! my dear husband?

WERNER.

Or worse—involving all I love, in this
Far worse than solitude. *Alone*, I had died,
And all been over in a nameless grave.

JOSEPHINE.

And I had not outlived thee; but pray take
Comfort! We have struggled long; and they who strive
With fortune win or weary her at last,
So that they find the goal, or cease to feel
Further. Take comfort,—we shall find our boy.

WERNER.

We were in sight of him, of every thing
Which could bring compensation for past sorrow—
And to be baffled thus!

JOSEPHINE.

We are not baffled.

WERNER.

Are we not pennyless?

JOSEPHINE.

We ne'er were wealthy.

WERNER.

But I was born to wealth, and rank, and power;
Enjoy'd them, loved them, and, alas! abused them,
And forfeited them by my father's wrath,
In my o'er-fervent youth; but for the abuse
Long sufferings have atoned. My father's death
Left the path open, yet not without snares.
This cold and creeping kinsman, who so long
Kept his eye on me, as the snake upon
The fluttering bird, hath ere this time outstept me,
Become the master of my rights, and lord
Of that which lifts him up to princes in
Dominion and domain.

JOSEPHINE.

Who knows? our son
May have return'd back to his grandsire, and
Even now uphold thy rights for thee?

WERNER.

'Tis hopeless.
Since his strange disappearance from my father's,
Entailing, as it were, my sins upon
Himself, no tidings have reveal'd his course.
I parted with him to his grandsire, on
The promise that his anger would stop short
Of the third generation; but Heaven seems
To claim her stern prerogative, and visit
Upon my boy his father's faults and follies.

JOSEPHINE.

I must hope better still,—at least we have yet
Baffled the long pursuit of Stralenheim.

WERNER.

We should have done, but for this fatal sickness,
More fatal than a mortal malady,
Because it takes not life, but life's sole solace:
Even now I feel my spirit girt about
By the snares of this avaricious fiend;—
How do I know he hath not track'd us here?

JOSEPHINE.

He does not know thy person; and his spies,
Who so long watch'd thee, have been left at Hamburgh.
Our unexpected journey, and this change
Of name, leaves all discovery far behind:
None hold us here for aught save what we seem.

WERNER.

Save what we seem! save what we *are*—sick beggars,
Even to our very hopes.——Ha! ha!

JOSEPHINE.

Alas!
That bitter laugh!

WERNER.

Who would read in this form
The high soul of the son of a long line?
Who, in this garb, the heir of princely lands?
Who, in this sunken, sickly eye, the pride
Of rank and ancestry? in this worn cheek,
And famine-hollow'd brow, the lord of halls,
Which daily feast a thousand vassals?

JOSEPHINE.

You
Ponder'd not thus upon these worldly things,

My Werner! when you deign'd to choose for bride
The foreign daughter of a wandering exile.

WERNER.

An exile's daughter with an outcast son
Were a fit marriage; but I still had hopes
To lift thee to the state we both were born for.
Your father's house was noble, though decay'd;
And worthy by its birth to match with ours.

JOSEPHINE.

Your father did not think so, though 'twas noble;
But had my birth been all my claim to match
With thee, I should have deem'd it what it is.

WERNER.

And what is that in thine eyes?

JOSEPHINE.

All which it
Has done in our behalf,—nothing.

WERNER.

How,—nothing?

JOSEPHINE.

Or worse; for it has been a canker in
Thy heart from the beginning: but for this,
We had not felt our poverty, but as

Millions of myriads feel it, cheerfully;
But for these phantoms of thy feudal fathers,
Thou might'st have earn'd thy bread as thousands earn it;
Or, if that seem too humble, tried by commerce,
Or other civic means, to amend thy fortunes.

WERNER (*ironically*).

And been an Hanseatic burgher? Excellent!

JOSEPHINE.

Whate'er thou might'st have been, to me thou art,
What no state, high or low, can ever change,
My heart's first choice;—which chose thee, knowing neither
Thy birth, thy hopes, thy pride; nought, save thy sorrows:
While they last, let me comfort or divide them;
When they end, let mine end with them, or thee!

WERNER.

My better angel! such I have ever found thee;
This rashness, or this weakness of my temper,
Ne'er raised a thought to injure thee or thine.
Thou didst not mar my fortunes: my own nature
In youth was such as to unmake an empire,
Had such been my inheritance; but now,

Chasten'd, subdued, out-worn, and taught to know
Myself,—to lose this for our son and thee!
Trust me, when, in my two-and-twentieth spring
My father barr'd me from my father's house,
The last sole scion of a thousand sires
(For I was then the last), it hurt me less
Than to behold my boy and my boy's mother
Excluded in their innocence from what
My faults deserved exclusion: although then
My passions were all living serpents, and
Twined like the gorgon's round me.

[*A knocking is heard.*

JOSEPHINE.

Hark!

WERNER.

A knocking!

JOSEPHINE.

Who can it be at this lone hour? we have
Few visitors.

WERNER.

And poverty hath none,
Save those who come to make it poorer still.
Well, I am prepared.

[WERNER *puts his hand into his bosom as if to search for some weapon.*

JOSEPHINE.

Oh! do not look so. I
Will to the door, it cannot be of import
In this lone spot of wintry desolation—
The very desert saves man from mankind.

[*She goes to the door.*

Enter IDENSTEIN.

IDENSTEIN.

A fair good evening to my fairer hostess
And worthy——what's your name, my friend?

WERNER.

Are you
Not afraid to demand it?

IDENSTEIN.

Not afraid?
Egad! I am afraid. You look as if
I ask'd for something better than your name,
By the face you put on it.

WERNER.

Better, sir!

IDENSTEIN.

Better or worse, like matrimony, what

Shall I say more? You have been a guest this month
Here in the prince's palace—(to be sure,
His highness had resign'd it to the ghosts
And rats these twelve years—but 'tis still a palace)—
I say you have been our lodger, and as yet
We do not know your name.

WERNER.

My name is Werner.

IDENSTEIN.

A goodly name, a very worthy name
As e'er was gilt upon a trader's board;
I have a cousin in the lazaretto
Of Hamburgh, who has got a wife who bore
The same. He is an officer of trust,
Surgeon's assistant (hoping to be surgeon),
And has done miracles i' the way of business.
Perhaps you are related to my relative?

WERNER.

To yours?

JOSEPHINE.

Oh, yes; we are, but distantly.

[*Aside to* WERNER.

Cannot you humour the dull gossip till
We learn his purpose?

IDENSTEIN.

Well, I'm glad of that;
I thought so all along; such natural yearnings
Play'd round my heart—blood is not water, cousin;
And so let's have some wine, and drink unto
Our better acquaintance: relatives should be
Friends.

WERNER.

You appear to have drank enough already,
And if you had not, I've no wine to offer,
Else it were yours; but this you know, or should
know:
You see I am poor and sick, and will not see
That I would be alone; but to your business!
What brings you here?

IDENSTEIN.

Why, what should bring me here?

WERNER.

I know not, though I think that I could guess
That which will send you hence.

JOSEPHINE (*aside*).

Patience, dear Werner!

IDENSTEIN.

You don't know what has happened, then?

JOSEPHINE.

How should we?

IDENSTEIN.

The river has o'erflow'd.

JOSEPHINE.

Alas! we have known
That to our sorrow, for these five days; since
It keeps us here.

IDENSTEIN.

But what you don't know is,
That a great personage, who fain would cross
Against the stream, and three postillions' wishes,
Is drown'd below the ford, with five post horses,
A monkey, and a mastiff, and a valet.

JOSEPHINE.

Poor creatures! are you sure?

IDENSTEIN.

Yes, of the monkey,
And the valet, and the cattle; but as yet
We know not if his excellency's dead
Or no; your noblemen are hard to drown,
As it is fit that men in office should be;

But, what is certain is, that he has swallow'd
Enough of the Oder to have burst two peasants;
And now a Saxon and Hungarian traveller,
Who, at their proper peril, snatch'd him from
The whirling river, have sent on to crave
A lodging, or a grave, according as
It may turn out with the live or dead body.

JOSEPHINE.

And where will you receive him? here, I hope,
If we can be of service—say the word.

IDENSTEIN.

Here? no; but in the prince's own apartment,
As fits a noble guest: 'tis damp, no doubt,
Not having been inhabited these twelve years;
But then he comes from a much damper place,
So scarcely will catch cold in't, if he be
Still liable to cold—and if not, why
He'll be worse lodged to-morrow: ne'ertheless,
I have order'd fire and all appliances
To be got ready for the worst—that is,
In case he should survive.

JOSEPHINE.

Poor gentleman!
I hope he will, with all my heart.

WERNER.

Intendant,
Have you not learn'd his name? My Josephine,
[*Aside to his wife.*
Retire, I'll sift this fool. [*Exit* JOSEPHINE.

IDENSTEIN.

His name? oh Lord!
Who knows if he hath now a name or no;
'Tis time enough to ask it when he's able
To give an answer, or if not, to put
His heir's upon his epitaph. Methought
Just now you chid me for demanding names?

WERNER.

True, true, I did so; you say well and wisely.

Enter GABOR.

GABOR.

If I intrude, I crave——

IDENSTEIN.

Oh, no intrusion!
This is the palace; this a stranger like
Yourself; I pray you make yourself at home:
But where's his excellency, and how fares he?

GABOR.

Wetly and wearily, but out of peril;

He paused to change his garments in a cottage
(Where I doff'd mine for these, and came on hither),
And has almost recover'd from his drenching.
He will be here anon.

IDENSTEIN.

What ho, there! bustle!
Without there, Herman, Weilburg, Peter, Conrad!
[*Gives directions to different servants who enter.*
A nobleman sleeps here to night—see that
All is in order in the damask chamber—
Keep up the stove—I will myself to the cellar—
And Madame Idenstein (my consort, stranger,)
Shall furnish forth the bed-apparel; for,
To say the truth, they are marvellous scant of this
Within the palace precincts, since his highness
Left it some dozen years ago. And then
His excellency will sup, doubtless?

GABOR.

Faith!
I cannot tell; but I should think the pillow
Would please him better than the table after
His soaking in your river: but for fear
Your viands should be thrown away, I mean

To sup myself, and have a friend without
Who will do honour to your good cheer with
A traveller's appetite.

IDENSTEIN.

But are you sure
His excellency——but his name, what is it?

GABOR.

I do not know.

IDENSTEIN.

And yet you saved his life.

GABOR.

I help'd my friend to do so.

IDENSTEIN.

Well, that's strange,
To save a man's life whom you do not know.

GABOR.

Not so; for there are some I know so well,
I scarce should give myself the trouble.

IDENSTEIN.

Pray,
Good friend, and who may you be?

GABOR.

By my family,
Hungarian.

IDENSTEIN.

Which is call'd?

GABOR.

It matters little.

IDENSTEIN (*aside*).

I think that all the world are grown anonymous,
Since no one cares to tell me what he's call'd!
Pray, has his excellency a large suite?

GABOR.

Sufficient.

IDENSTEIN.

How many?

GABOR.

I did not count them.
We came up by mere accident, and just
In time to drag him through his carriage window.

IDENSTEIN.

Well, what would I give to save a great man!
No doubt you'll have a swingeing sum as recompense.

GABOR.

Perhaps.

IDENSTEIN.

Now, how much do you reckon on?

GABOR.

I have not yet put up myself to sale:
In the mean time, my best reward would be
A glass of your Hockcheimer, a *green* glass,
Wreathed with rich grapes and Bacchanal devices,
O'erflowing with the oldest of your vintage;
For which I promise you, in case you e'er
Run hazard of being drown'd (although I own
It seems, of all deaths, the least likely for you),
I'll pull you out for nothing. Quick, my friend,
And think, for every bumper I shall quaff,
A wave the less may roll above your head.

IDENSTEIN (*aside*).

I don't much like this fellow—close and dry
He seems, two things which suit me not; however,
Wine he shall have; if that unlocks him not,
I shall not sleep to-night for curiosity.

[*Exit* IDENSTEIN.

GABOR (*to* WERNER).

This master of the ceremonies is
The intendant of the palace, I presume.
'Tis a fine building, but decay'd.

WERNER.

The apartment

Design'd for him you rescued will be found
In fitter order for a sickly guest.

GABOR.

I wonder then you occupied it not,
For you seem delicate in health.

WERNER (*quickly*).

Sir!

GABOR.

Pray
Excuse me: have I said aught to offend you?

WERNER.

Nothing: but we are strangers to each other.

GABOR.

And that's the reason I would have us less so:
I thought our bustling guest without had said
You were a chance and passing guest, the counterpart
Of me and my companions.

WERNER.

Very true.

GABOR.

Then, as we never met before, and never,
It may be, may again encounter, why,
I thought to cheer up this old dungeon here

(At least to me) by asking you to share
The fare of my companions and myself.

WERNER.

Pray, pardon me; my health——

GABOR.

Even as you please.
I have been a soldier, and perhaps am blunt
In bearing.

WERNER.

I have also served, and can
Requite a soldier's greeting.

GABOR.

In what service?
The imperial?

WERNER (*quickly, and then interrupting himself*).

I commanded—no—I mean
I served; but it is many years ago,
When first Bohemia raised her banner 'gainst
The Austrian.

GABOR.

Well, that's over now, and peace
Has turn'd some thousand gallant hearts adrift
To live as they best may; and, to say truth,
Some take the shortest.

WERNER.

What is that?

GABOR.

Whate'er

They lay their hands on. All Silesia and
Lusatia's woods are tenanted by bands
Of the late troops, who levy on the country
Their maintenance: the Chatelains must keep
Their castle walls—beyond them 'tis but doubtful
Travel for your rich count or full-blown baron.
My comfort is that, wander where I may,
I've little left to lose now.

WERNER.

And I—nothing.

GABOR.

That's harder still. You say you were a soldier.

WERNER.

I was.

GABOR.

You look one still. All soldiers are
Or should be comrades, even though enemies.
Our swords when drawn must cross, our engines aim
(While levell'd) at each other's hearts; but when

A truce, a peace, or what you will, remits
The steel into its scabbard, and lets sleep
The spark which lights the matchlock, we are brethren.
You are poor and sickly—I am not rich but healthy;
I want for nothing which I cannot want;
You seem devoid of this—wilt share it?

[GABOR *pulls out his purse.*

WERNER.

Who
Told you I was a beggar?

GABOR.

You yourself,
In saying you were a soldier during peace-time.

WERNER (*looking at him with suspicion*).

You know me not?

GABOR.

I know no man, not even
Myself: how should I then know one I ne'er
Beheld till half an hour since?

WERNER.

Sir, I thank you.
Your offer's noble were it to a friend,

And not unkind as to an unknown stranger,
Though scarcely prudent; but no less I thank you.
I am a beggar in all save his trade,
And when I beg of any one it shall be
Of him who was the first to offer what
Few can obtain by asking. Pardon me.

[*Exit* WERNER.

GABOR (*solus*).

A goodly fellow by his looks, though worn,
As most good fellows are, by pain or pleasure,
Which tear life out of us before our time:
I scarce know which most quickly; but he seems
To have seen better days, as who has not
Who has seen yesterday?—But here approaches
Our sage intendant, with the wine; however,
For the cup's sake, I'll bear the cup-bearer.

Enter IDENSTEIN.

IDENSTEIN.

'Tis here! the supernaculum! tweaty years
Of age, if 'tis a day.

GABOR.

Which epoch makes
Young women and old wine, and 'tis great pity

Of two such excellent things, increase of years,
Which still improves the one, should spoil the other.
Fill full—Here's to our hostess—your fair wife.
[*Takes the glass.*

IDENSTEIN.

Fair!—Well, I trust your taste in wine is equal
To that you show for beauty; but I pledge you
Nevertheless.

GABOR.

Is not the lovely woman
I met in the adjacent hall, who, with
An air, and port, and eye, which would have better
Beseem'd this palace in its brightest days
(Though in a garb adapted to its present
Abandonment), return'd my salutation—
Is not the same your spouse?

IDENSTEIN.

I would she were!
But you're mistaken—that's the stranger's wife.

GABOR.

And by her aspect she might be a prince's:
Though time hath touch'd her too, she still retains
Much beauty, and more majesty.

IDENSTEIN.

And that
Is more than I can say for Madame Idenstein,
At least in beauty: as for majesty,
She has some of its properties which might
Be spared—but never mind!

GABOR.

I don't. But who
May be this stranger. He too hath a bearing
Above his outward fortunes.

IDENSTEIN.

There I differ.
He's poor as Job, and not so patient; but
Who he may be, or what, or aught of him,
Except his name (and that I only learn'd
To-night), I know not.

GABOR.

But how came he here?

IDENSTEIN.

In a most miserable old caleche,
About a month since, and immediately
Fell sick, almost to death. He should have died.

GABOR.

Tender and true!—but why?

IDENSTEIN.

Why, what is life
Without a living? He has not a stiver.

GABOR.

In that case, I much wonder that a person
Of your apparent prudence should admit
Guests so forlorn into this noble mansion.

IDENSTEIN.

That's true; but pity, as you know, *does* make
One's heart commit these follies; and besides,
They had some valuables left at that time,
Which paid their way up to the present hour,
And so I thought they might as well be lodged
Here as at the small tavern, and I gave them
The run of some of the oldest palace rooms.
They served to air them, at the least as long
As they could pay for fire-wood.

GABOR.

Poor souls!

IDENSTEIN.

Ay,
Exceeding poor.

GABOR.

And yet unused to poverty,
If I mistake not. Whither were they going?

IDENSTEIN.

Oh! Heaven knows where, unless to Heaven itself.
Some days ago that look'd the likeliest journey
For Werner.

GABOR.

Werner! I have heard the name,
But it may be a feign'd one.

IDENSTEIN.

Like enough!
But hark! a noise of wheels and voices, and
A blaze of torches from without. As sure
As destiny, his excellency's come.
I must be at my post: will you not join me,
To help him from his carriage, and present
Your humble duty at the door?

GABOR.

I dragg'd him
From out that carriage when he would have given
His barony or county to repel
The rushing river from his gurgling throat.
He has valets now enough: they stood aloof then
Shaking their dripping ears upon the shore,
All roaring, "Help!" but offering none; and as
For *duty* (as you call it) I did mine *then*,

Now do *yours*. Hence, and bow and cringe him here!

IDENSTEIN.

I cringe!—but I shall lose the opportunity—
Plague take it! he'll be *here*, and I *not there!*

[*Exit* IDENSTEIN, *hastily*.

Re-enter WERNER.

WERNER (*to himself*).

I heard a noise of wheels and voices. How
All sounds now jar me!
(*Perceiving* GABOR). Still here! Is he not
A spy of my pursuer's? His frank offer,
So suddenly, and to a stranger, wore
The aspect of a secret enemy;
For friends are slow at such.

GABOR.

You seem rapt,
And yet the time is not akin to thought.
These old walls will be noisy soon. The baron,
Or count (or whatsoe'er this half-drown'd noble
May be), for whom this desolate village, and
Its lone inhabitants, show more respect
Than did the elements, is come.

IDENSTEIN (*without*).

This way—
This way, your excellency:—have a care,
The staircase is a little gloomy, and
Somewhat decay'd; but if we had expected
So high a guest—pray take my arm, my lord!

Enter STRALENHEIM, IDENSTEIN, *and attendants, partly his own, and partly retainers of the domain, of which* IDENSTEIN *is Intendant.*

STRALENHEIM.

I'll rest me here a moment.

IDENSTEIN (*to the servants*).

Ho! a chair!
Instantly, knaves! [STRALENHEIM *sits down.*

WERNER (*aside*).

'Tis he!

STRALENHEIM.

I'm better now.
Who are these strangers?

IDENSTEIN.

Please you, my good lord,
One says he is no stranger.

WERNER (*aloud and hastily*).

Who says that?

[*They look at him with surprise.*

IDENSTEIN.

Why, no one spoke *of you*, or *to you!*—but
Here's one his excellency may be pleased
To recognise. [*Pointing to* GABOR.

GABOR.

I seek not to disturb
His noble memory.

STRALENHEIM.

I apprehend
This is one of the strangers to whose aid
I owe my rescue. Is not that the other?
[*Pointing to* WERNER.
My state, when I was succour'd, must excuse
My uncertainty to whom I owe so much.

IDENSTEIN.

He!—no, my lord! he rather wants for rescue
Than can afford it. 'Tis a poor sick man,
Travel-tired, and lately risen from a bed
From whence he never dream'd to rise.

STRALENHEIM.

Methought
That there were two.

GABOR.

There were, in company;
But, in the service render'd to your lordship,
I needs must say but *one*, and he is absent.
The chief part of whatever aid was render'd,
Was *his:* it was his fortune to be first.
My will was not inferior, but his strength
And youth outstripp'd me; therefore do not waste
Your thanks on me. I was but a glad second
Unto a nobler principal.

STRALENHEIM.

Where is he?

AN ATTENDANT.

My lord, he tarried in the cottage, where
Your excellency rested for an hour,
And said he would be here to-morrow.

STRALENHEIM.

Till
That hour arrives, I can but offer thanks,
And then——

GABOR.

I seek no more, and scarce deserve
So much. My comrade may speak for himself.

STRALENHEIM (*fixing his eyes upon* WERNER, *then aside*).

It cannot be! and yet he must be look'd to.
'Tis twenty years since I beheld him with
These eyes; and, though my agents still have kept
Theirs on him, policy has held aloof
My own from his, not to alarm him into
Suspicion of my plan. Why did I leave
At Hamburgh those who would have made assurance
If this be he or no? I thought, ere now,
To have been lord of Siegendorf, and parted
In haste, though even the elements appear
To fight against me, and this sudden flood
May keep me prisoner here till——

[*He pauses and looks at* WERNER; *then resumes.*

This man must
Be watch'd. If it is he, he is so changed,
His father, rising from his grave again,
Would pass him by unknown. I must be wary;
An error would spoil all.

IDENSTEIN.

Your lordship seems
Pensive. Will it not please you to pass on?

STRALENHEIM.

'Tis past fatigue which gives my weigh'd-down spirit
An outward show of thought. I will to rest.

IDENSTEIN.

The prince's chamber is prepared, with all
The very furniture the prince used when
Last here, in its full splendour.
(*Aside*). Somewhat tatter'd,
And devilish damp, but fine enough by torch-light;
And that's enough for your right noble blood
Of twenty quarterings upon a hatchment;
So let their bearer sleep 'neath something like one
Now, as he one day will for ever lie.

STRALENHEIM (*rising, and turning to* GABOR).

Good night, good people! Sir, I trust to-morrow
Will find me apter to requite your service.
In the meantime, I crave your company
A moment in my chamber.

GABOR.

I attend you.

STRALENHEIM

(*After a few steps, pauses, and calls* WERNER).
Friend!

WERNER.

Sir!

IDENSTEIN.

Sir! Lord—oh, Lord! Why don't you say
His lordship, or his excellency? Pray,
My lord, excuse this poor man's want of breeding:
He hath not been accustom'd to admission
To such a presence.

STRALENHEIM (*to* IDENSTEIN).

Peace, intendant!

IDENSTEIN.

Oh!
I am dumb.

STRALENHEIM (*to* WERNER).

Have you been long here?

WERNER.

Long?

STRALENHEIM.

I sought
An answer, not an echo.

WERNER.

You may seek
Both from the walls. I am not used to answer
Those whom I know not.

STRALENHEIM.

Indeed! ne'er the less,
You might reply with courtesy, to what
Is ask'd in kindness.

WERNER.

When I know it such,
I will requite—that is, *reply*—in unison.

STRALENHEIM.

The intendant said, you had been detain'd by sickness—
If I could aid you—journeying the same way?

WERNER (*quickly*).

I am not journeying the same way.

STRALENHEIM.

How know ye
That, ere you know my route?

WERNER.

Because there is
But one way that the rich and poor must tread
Together. You diverged from that dread path

Some hours ago, and I some days; henceforth
Our roads must lie asunder, though they tend
All to one home.

STRALENHEIM.

Your language is above
Your station.

WERNER (*bitterly*).

Is it?

STRALENHEIM.

Or, at least, beyond
Your garb.

WERNER.

'Tis well that it is not beneath it,
As sometimes happens to the better clad.
But, in a word, what would you with me?

STRALENHEIM (*startled*).

I?

WERNER.

Yes—you! You know me not, and question me,
And wonder that I answer not—not knowing
My inquisitor. Explain what you would have,
And then I'll satisfy yourself, or me.

STRALENHEIM.

I knew not that you had reasons for reserve.

WERNER.

Many have such:—Have you none?

STRALENHEIM.

None which can
Interest a mere stranger.

WERNER.

Then forgive
The same unknown and humble stranger, if
He wishes to remain so to the man
Who can have nought in common with him.

STRALENHEIM.

Sir
I will not balk your humour, though untoward:
I only meant you service—but, good night!
Intendant, show the way! (*to* GABOR) Sir, you will with me?

[*Exeunt* STRALENHEIM *and Attendants*, IDENSTEIN *and* GABOR.

WERNER (*solus*).

'Tis he! I am taken in the toils. Before
I quitted Hamburgh, Giulio, his late steward,
Inform'd me, that he had obtain'd an order
From Brandenburgh's elector, for the arrest
Of Kruitzner (such the name I then bore), when

I came upon the frontier; the free city
Alone preserved my freedom—till I left
Its walls—fool that I was to quit them! But
I deem'd this humble garb, and route obscure,
Had baffled the slow hounds in their pursuit.
What's to be done? He knows me not by person;
Nor could aught, save the eye of apprehension,
Have recognised *him*, after twenty years,
We met so rarely and so coldly in
Our youth. But those about him! Now I can
Divine the frankness of the Hungarian, who,
No doubt, is a mere tool and spy of Stralenheim's
To sound and to secure me. Without means!
Sick, poor—begirt too with the flooding rivers,
Impassable even to the wealthy, with
All the appliances which purchase modes
Of overpowering peril with men's lives,—
How can I hope? An hour ago methought
My state beyond despair; and now, 'tis such,
The past seems paradise. Another day,
And I'm detected,—on the very eve
Of honours, rights, and my inheritance,
When a few drops of gold might save me still
In favouring an escape.

Enter IDENSTEIN *and* FRITZ *in conversation.*

FRITZ.

Immediately.

IDENSTEIN.

I tell you, 'tis impossible.

FRITZ.

It must
Be tried, however; and if one express
Fail, you must send on others, till the answer
Arrives from Frankfort, from the commandant.

IDENSTEIN.

I will do what I can.

FRITZ.

And recollect
To spare no trouble; you will be repaid
Tenfold.

IDENSTEIN.

The baron is retired to rest?

FRITZ.

He hath thrown himself into an easy chair
Beside the fire, and slumbers; and has order'd
He may not be disturb'd until eleven,
When he will take himself to bed.

IDENSTEIN.

Before
An hour is past I'll do my best to serve him.

FRITZ.

Remember! [*Exit* FRITZ.

IDENSTEIN.

The devil take these great men! they
Think all things made for them. Now here must I
Rouse up some half a dozen shivering vassals
From their scant pallets, and, at peril of
Their lives, despatch them o'er the river towards
Frankfort. Methinks the baron's own experience
Some hours ago might teach him fellow-feeling:
But no, "it *must*," and there's an end. How now?
Are you there, Mynheer Werner?

WERNER.

You have left
Your noble guest right quickly.

IDENSTEIN.

Yes—he's dozing,
And seems to like that none should sleep besides.
Here is a packet for the commandant
Of Frankfort, at all risks and all expenses;
But I must not lose time: Good night!

[*Exit* IDENSTEIN.

WERNER.

" To Frankfort! "

So, so, it thickens! Ay, " the commandant."
This tallies well with all the prior steps
Of this cool calculating fiend, who walks
Between me and my father's house. No doubt
He writes for a detachment to convey me
Into some secret fortress.—Sooner than
This——

[WERNER *looks around, and snatches up a knife lying on a table in a recess.*

Now I am master of myself at least.
Hark,—footsteps! How do I know that Stralenheim
Will wait for even the show of that authority
Which is to overshadow usurpation?
That he suspects me's certain. I'm alone;
He with a numerous train. I weak; he strong
In gold, in numbers, rank, authority.
I nameless, or involving in my name
Destruction, till I reach my own domain;
He full blown with his titles, which impose
Still further on these obscure petty burghers
Than they could do elsewhere. Hark! nearer still!

I'll to the secret passage, which communicates
With the——No! all is silent—'twas my fancy!—
Still as the breathless interval between
The flash and thunder:—I must hush my soul
Amidst its perils. Yet I will retire,
To see if still be unexplored the passage
I wot of: it will serve me as a den
Of secrecy for some hours, at the worst.

[WERNER *draws a pannel and exit, closing it after him.*

Enter GABOR *and* JOSEPHINE.

GABOR.

Where is your husband?

JOSEPHINE.

Here, I thought: I left him
Not long since in his chamber. But these rooms
Have many outlets, and he may be gone
To accompany the intendant.

GABOR.

Baron Stralenheim
Put many questions to the intendant on
The subject of your lord, and, to be plain,
I have my doubts if he means well.

JOSEPHINE.

Alas!
What can there be in common with the proud
And wealthy Baron and the unknown Werner?

GABOR.

That you know best.

JOSEPHINE.

Or, if it were so, how
Come you to stir yourself in his behalf,
Rather than that of him whose life you saved?

GABOR.

I help'd to save him, as in peril; but
I did not pledge myself to serve him in
Oppression. I know well these nobles, and
Their thousand modes of trampling on the poor.
I have proved them; and my spirit boils up when
I find them practising against the weak:—
This is my only motive.

JOSEPHINE.

It would be
Not easy to persuade my consort of
Your good intentions.

GABOR.

Is he so suspicious?

JOSEPHINE.

He was not once; but time and troubles have
Made him what you beheld.

GABOR.

I'm sorry for it.
Suspicion is a heavy armour, and
With its own weight impedes more than protects.
Good night. I trust to meet with him at daybreak.

[*Exit* GABOR.

Re-enter IDENSTEIN *and some peasants.* JOSEPHINE *retires up the Hall.*

FIRST PEASANT.

But if I'm drown'd?

IDENSTEIN.

Why, you'll be well paid for't,
And have risk'd more than drowning for as much,
I doubt not.

SECOND PEASANT.

But our wives and families?

IDENSTEIN.

Cannot be worse off than they are, and may
Be better.

THIRD PEASANT.

I have neither, and will venture.

IDENSTEIN.

That's right. A gallant carle, and fit to be
A soldier. I'll promote you to the ranks
In the prince's body guard—if you succeed;
And you shall have besides in sparkling coin
Two thalers.

THIRD PEASANT.

No more?

IDENSTEIN.

Out upon your avarice!
Can that low vice alloy so much ambition?
I tell thee, fellow, that two thalers in
Small change will subdivide into a treasure.
Do not five hundred thousand heroes daily
Risk lives and souls for the tithe of one thaler?
When had you half the sum?

THIRD PEASANT.

Never—but ne'er
The less I must have three.

IDENSTEIN.

Have you forgot
Whose vassal you were born, knave?

THIRD PEASANT.

No—the prince's,
And not the stranger's.

IDENSTEIN.

Sirrah! in the prince's
Absence, I'm sovereign; and the baron is
My intimate connexion:—"Cousin Idenstein!
(Quoth he) you'll order out a dozen villains."
And so, you villains! troop—march—march, I say:
And if a single dog's ear of this packet
Be sprinkled by the Oder—look to it!
For every page of paper, shall a hide
Of yours be stretch'd as parchment on a drum,
Like Ziska's skin, to beat alarm to all
Refractory vassals, who can not effect
Impossibilities—Away, ye earth-worms!

[*Exit, driving them out.*

JOSEPHINE (*coming forward*).

I fain would shun these scenes, too oft repeated,
Of feudal tyranny o'er petty victims;
I cannot aid, and will not witness such.
Even here, in this remote, unnamed, dull spot,
The dimmest in the district's map, exist
The insolence of wealth in poverty

O'er something poorer still—the pride of rank
In servitude, o'er something still more servile;
And vice in misery affecting still
A tatter'd splendour. What a state of being!
In Tuscany, my own dear sunny land,
Our nobles were but citizens and merchants,
Like Cosmo. We had evils, but not such
As these; and our all-ripe and gushing valleys
Made poverty more cheerful, where each herb
Was in itself a meal, and every vine
Rain'd, as it were, the beverage which makes glad
The heart of man; and the ne'er unfelt sun
(But rarely clouded, and when clouded, leaving
His warmth behind in memory of his beams),
Makes the worn mantle, and the thin robe, less
Oppressive than an emperor's jewell'd purple.
But, here! the despots of the north appear
To imitate the ice-wind of their clime,
Searching the shivering vassal through his rags,
To wring his soul—as the bleak elements
His form. And 'tis to be amongst these sovereigns
My husband pants! and such his pride of birth—
That twenty years of usage, such as no
Father, born in a humble state, could nerve

His soul to persecute a son withal,
Hath changed no atom of his early nature;
But I, born nobly also, from my father's
Kindness was taught a different lesson. Father!
May thy long-tried, and now rewarded spirit,
Look down on us and our so long desired
Ulric! I love my son, as thou didst me!
What's that? Thou, Werner! can it be? and thus.

Enter WERNER *hastily, with the knife in his hand, by the secret pannel, which he closes hurriedly after him.*

WERNER (*not at first recognising her*).

Discovered! then I'll stab——(*recognising her*).
Ah! Josephine,
Why art thou not at rest?

JOSEPHINE.

What rest? My God!
What doth this mean?

WERNER (*showing a rouleau*).

Here's *gold—gold*, Josephine,
Will rescue us from this detested dungeon.

JOSEPHINE.

And how obtain'd?—that knife!

WERNER.

'Tis bloodless—*yet*.

Away—we must to our chamber.

JOSEPHINE.

But whence com'st thou?

WERNER.

Ask not! but let us think where we shall go—
This—this will make us way—(*showing the gold*)—
I'll fit them now.

JOSEPHINE.

I dare not think thee guilty of dishonour.

WERNER.

Dishonour!

JOSEPHINE.

I have said it.

WERNER.

Let us hence:
'Tis the last night, I trust, that we need pass here.

JOSEPHINE.

And not the worst, I hope.

WERNER.

Hope! I make *sure*.
But let us to our chamber.

JOSEPHINE.

Yet one question—
What hast thou *done*?

WERNER (*fiercely*).

Left one thing *undone*, which
Had made all well: let me not think of it!
Away!

JOSEPHINE.

Alas, that I should doubt of thee!

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A Hall in the same Palace.

Enter IDENSTEIN *and Others.*

IDENSTEIN.

Fine doings! goodly doings! honest doings!
A baron pillaged in a prince's palace!
Where, till this hour, such a sin ne'er was heard of.

FRITZ.

It hardly could, unless the rats despoil'd
The mice of a few shreds of tapestry.

IDENSTEIN.

Oh! that I ere should live to see this day!
The honour of our city's gone for ever.

FRITZ.

Well, but now to discover the delinquent:
The baron is determined not to lose
This sum without a search.

IDENSTEIN.

And so am I.

FRITZ.

But whom do you suspect?

IDENSTEIN.

Suspect! all people
Without—within—above—below—Heaven help me!

FRITZ.

Is there no other entrance to the chamber?

IDENSTEIN.

None whatsoever.

FRITZ.

Are you sure of that?

IDENSTEIN.

Certain. I have lived and served here since my birth,
And if there were such, must have heard of such,
Or seen it.

FRITZ.

Then it must be some one who
Had access to the antechamber.

IDENSTEIN.

Doubtless.

FRITZ.

The man call'd *Werner*'s poor!

IDENSTEIN.

Poor as a miser,
But lodged so far off, in the other wing,
By which there's no communication with
The baron's chamber, that it can't be he:
Besides, I bade him "good night" in the hall,
Almost a mile off, and which only leads
To his own apartment, about the same time
When this burglarious, larcenous felony
Appears to have been committed.

FRITZ.

There's another—
The stranger—

IDENSTEIN.

The Hungarian?

FRITZ.

He who help'd
To fish the baron from the Oder.

IDENSTEIN.

Not
Unlikely. But, hold—might it not have been
One of the suite?

FRITZ.

How? *We*, Sir!

IDENSTEIN.

No—not *you*,
But some of the inferior knaves. You say
The baron was asleep in the great chair—
The velvet chair—in his embroider'd night-gown;
His toilet spread before him, and upon it
A cabinet with letters, papers, and
Several rouleaux of gold; of which *one* only
Has disappear'd:—the door unbolted, with
No difficult access to any.

FRITZ.

Good Sir,
Be not so quick; the honour of the corps,
Which forms the baron's household, 's unim-
peach'd,
From steward to scullion, save in the fair way
Of peculation; such as in accompts,
Weights, measures, larder, cellar, buttery,
Where all men take their prey; as also in
Postage of letters, gathering of rents,
Purveying feasts, and understanding with
The honest trades who furnish noble masters:

But for your petty, picking, downright thievery,
We scorn it as we do board-wages: then
Had one of our folks done it, he would not
Have been so poor a spirit as to hazard
His neck for *one* rouleau, but have swoop'd all;
Also the cabinet, if portable.

IDENSTEIN.

There is some sense in that——

FRITZ.

No, Sir; be sure
'Twas none of our corps; but some petty, trivial
Picker and stealer, without art or genius.
The only question is—Who else could have
Access, save the Hungarian and yourself?

IDENSTEIN.

You don't mean me?

FRITZ.

No, Sir; I honour more
Your talents——

IDENSTEIN.

And my principles, I hope.

FRITZ.

Of course. But to the point: What's to be done?

IDENSTEIN.

Nothing—but there's a good deal to be said.
We'll offer a reward; move heaven and earth,
And the police (though there's none nearer than
Frankfort); post notices in manuscript
(For we've no printer); and set by my clerk
To read them (for few can, save he and I).
We'll send out villains to strip beggars, and
Search empty pockets; also, to arrest
All gipsies, and ill-clothed and sallow people.
Prisoners we'll have at least, if not the culprit;
And for the baron's gold—if 'tis not found,
At least he shall have the full satisfaction
Of melting twice its substance in the raising
The ghost of this rouleau. Here's alchymy
For your lord's losses!

FRITZ.

He hath found a better.

IDENSTEIN.

Where?

FRITZ.

In a most immense inheritance.
The late Count Seigendorf, his distant kinsman,

Is dead near Prague, in his castle, and my lord
Is on his way to take possession.

IDENSTEIN.

Was there
No heir?

FRITZ.

Oh, yes; but he has disappear'd
Long from the world's eye, and perhaps the world.
A prodigal son, beneath his father's ban
For the last twenty years; for whom his sire
Refused to kill the fatted calf; and, therefore,
If living, he must chew the husks still. But
The baron would find means to silence him,
Were he to re-appear: he's politic,
And has much influence with a certain court.

IDENSTEIN.

He's fortunate.

FRITZ.

'Tis true, there is a grandson,
Whom the late count reclaim'd from his son's hands,
And educated as his heir; but then
His birth is doubtful.

IDENSTEIN.

How so?

FRITZ.

His sire made
A left-hand, love, imprudent sort of marriage,
With an Italian exile's dark-eyed daughter:
Noble, they say, too; but no match for such
A house as Siegendorf's. The grandsire ill
Could brook the alliance; and could ne'er be brought
To see the parents, though he took the son.

IDENSTEIN.

If he's a lad of mettle, he may yet
Dispute your claim, and weave a web that may
Puzzle your baron to unravel.

FRITZ.

Why,
For mettle, he has quite enough: they say,
He forms a happy mixture of his sire
And grandsire's qualities,—impetuous as
The former, and deep as the latter; but
The strangest is, that he too disappear'd
Some months ago.

IDENSTEIN.

The devil he did!

FRITZ.

Why, yes;
It must have been at his suggestion, at
An hour so critical as was the eve
Of the old man's death, whose heart was broken
by it.

IDENSTEIN.

Was there no cause assign'd?

FRITZ.

Plenty, no doubt,
And none perhaps the true one. Some averr'd
It was to seek his parents; some, because
The old man held his spirit in so strictly
(But that could scarce be, for he doted on him);
A third believed he wish'd to serve in war,
But peace being made soon after his departure,
He might have since return'd, were that the
motive;
A fourth set charitably have surmised,
As there was something strange and mystic in him,
That in the wild exuberance of his nature,

He had join'd the black bands, who lay waste Lusatia,
The mountains of Bohemia and Silesia,
Since the last years of war had dwindled into
A kind of general condottiero system
Of bandit warfare; each troop with its chief,
And all against mankind.

IDENSTEIN.

That cannot be.
A young heir, bred to wealth and luxury,
To risk his life and honours with disbanded
Soldiers and desperadoes!

FRITZ.

Heaven best knows!
But there are human natures so allied
Unto the savage love of enterprise,
That they will seek for peril as a pleasure.
I've heard that nothing can reclaim your Indian,
Or tame the tiger, though their infancy
Were fed on milk and honey. After all,
Your Wallenstein, your Tilly and Gustavus,
Your Bannier, and your Torstenson and Weimar,
Were but the same thing upon a grand scale;

And now that they are gone, and peace proclaim'd,
They who would follow the same pastime must
Pursue it on their own account. Here comes
The baron, and the Saxon stranger, who
Was his chief aid in yesterday's escape,
But did not leave the cottage by the Oder
Until this morning.

Enter STRALENHEIM *and* ULRIC.

STRALENHEIM.

Since you have refused
All compensation, gentle stranger, save
Inadequate thanks, you almost check even them,
Making me feel the worthlessness of words,
And blush at my own barren gratitude,
They seem so niggardly, compared with what
Your courteous courage did in my behalf.

ULRIC.

I pray you press the theme no further.

STRALENHEIM.

But
Can I not serve you? You are young, and of

That mould which throws out heroes; fair in favour;
Brave, I know, by my living now to say so,
And, doubtlessly, with such a form and heart,
Would look into the fiery eyes of war,
As ardently for glory as you dared
An obscure death to save an unknown stranger
In an as perilous but opposite element.
You are made for the service: I have served;
Have rank by birth and soldiership, and friends,
Who shall be yours. 'Tis true, this pause of peace
Favours such views at present scantily;
But 'twill not last, men's spirits are too stirring;
And, after thirty years of conflict, peace
Is but a petty war, as the times show us
In every forest, or a mere arm'd truce.
War will reclaim his own; and, in the meantime,
You might obtain a post, which would ensure
A higher soon, and, by my influence, fail not
To rise. I speak of Brandenburg, wherein
I stand well with the elector; in Bohemia,
Like you, I am a stranger, and we are now
Upon its frontier.

ULRIC.

You perceive my garb
Is Saxon, and of course my service due
To my own sovereign. If I must decline
Your offer, 'tis with the same feeling which
Induced it.

STRALENHEIM.

Why, this is mere usury!
I owe my life to you, and you refuse
The acquittance of the interest of the debt,
To heap more obligations on me, till
I bow beneath them.

ULRIC.

You shall say so when
I claim the payment.

STRALENHEIM.

Well, Sir, since you will not—
You are nobly born?

ULRIC.

I've heard my kinsmen say so.

STRALENHEIM.

Your actions show it. Might I ask your name?

ULRIC.

Ulric.

STRALENHEIM.

Your house's?

ULRIC.

When I'm worthy of it,
I'll answer you.

STRALENHEIM (*aside*).

Most probably an Austrian,
Whom these unsettled times forbid to boast
His lineage on these wild and dangerous frontiers,
Where the name of his country is abhorr'd.
[*Aloud to* FRITZ *and* IDENSTEIN.
So, Sirs! how have ye sped in your researches?

IDENSTEIN.

Indifferent well, your excellency.

STRALENHEIM.

Then
I am to deem the plunderer is caught?

IDENSTEIN.

Humph!—not exactly.

STRALENHEIM.

Or at least suspected?

IDENSTEIN.

Oh! for that matter, very much suspected.

STRALENHEIM.

Who may he be?

IDENSTEIN.

Why, don't *you* know, my lord?

STRALENHEIM.

How should I? I was fast asleep.

IDENSTEIN.

And so
Was I, and that's the cause I know no more
Than does your excellency.

STRALENHEIM.

Dolt!

IDENSTEIN.

Why, if
Your lordship, being robb'd, don't recognise
The rogue; how should I, not being robb'd, identify
The thief among so many? In the crowd,
May it please your excellency, your thief looks
Exactly like the rest, or rather better:
'Tis only at the bar and in the dungeon
That wise men know your felon by his features;
But I'll engage, that if seen there but once,

Whether he be found criminal or no,
His face shall be so.

STRALENHEIM (*to* FRITZ).

Prithee, Fritz, inform me
What hath been done to trace the fellow?

FRITZ.

Faith!
My lord, not much as yet, except conjecture.

STRALENHEIM.

Besides the loss (which, I must own, affects me
Just now materially), I needs would find
The villain out of public motives; for
So dexterous a spoiler, who could creep
Through my attendants, and so many peopled
And lighted chambers, on my rest, and snatch
The gold before my scarce closed eyes, would soon
Leave bare your borough, Sir Intendant!

IDENSTEIN.

True;
If there were aught to carry off, my lord.

ULRIC.

What is all this?

STRALENHEIM.

You join'd us but this morning,

And have not heard that I was robb'd last night.

ULRIC.

Some rumour of it reach'd me as I pass'd
The outer chambers of the palace, but
I know no further.

STRALENHEIM.

It is a strange business:
The intendant can inform you of the facts.

IDENSTEIN.

Most willingly. You see——

STRALENHEIM (*impatiently*).

Defer your tale,
Till certain of the hearer's patience.

IDENSTEIN.

That
Can only be approved by proofs. You see——

STRALENHEIM (*again interrupting him, and addressing* ULRIC).

In short, I was asleep upon a chair,
My cabinet before me, with some gold
Upon it (more than I much like to lose,
Though in part only): some ingenious person
Contrived to glide through all my own attendants,

Besides those of the place, and bore away
An hundred golden ducats, which to find
I would be fain, and there's an end; perhaps
You (as I still am rather faint), would add
To yesterday's great obligation, this,
Though slighter, yet not slight, to aid these men
(Who seem but lukewarm) in recovering it?

ULRIC.

Most willingly, and without loss of time —
(*To* IDENSTEIN). Come hither, Mynheer!

IDENSTEIN.

But so much haste bodes
Right little speed, and——

ULRIC.

Standing motionless,
None; so let's march, we'll talk as we go on.

IDENSTEIN.

But——

ULRIC.

Show the spot, and then I'll answer you.

FRITZ.

I will, Sir, with his excellency's leave.

STRALENHEIM.

Do so, and take yon old ass with you.

FRITZ.

Hence!

ULRIC.

Come on, old oracle, expound thy riddle!

[*Exit with* IDENSTEIN *and* FRITZ.

STRALENHEIM (*solus*).

A stalwart, active, soldier-looking stripling,
Handsome as Hercules ere his first labour,
And with a brow of thought beyond his years
When in repose, till his eye kindles up
In answering yours. I wish I could engage him;
I have need of some such spirits near me now,
For this inheritance is worth a struggle.
And though I am not the man to yield without one,
Neither are they who now rise up between me
And my desire. The boy, they say, 's a bold one:
But he hath play'd the truant in some hour
Of freakish folly, leaving fortune to
Champion his claims: that's well. The father, whom
For years I've track'd, as does the blood-hound, never
In sight, but constantly in scent, had put me

To fault, but *here* I *have* him, and that's better.
It must be *he!* All circumstance proclaims it;
And careless voices, knowing not the cause
Of my inquiries, still confirm it—Yes!
The man, his bearing, and the mystery
Of his arrival and the time; the account, too,
The intendant gave (for I have not beheld her)
Of his wife's dignified but foreign aspect:
Besides the antipathy with which we met,
As snakes and lions shrink back from each other
By secret instinct that both must be foes
Deadly, without being natural prey to either;
All—all—confirm it to my mind: however,
We'll grapple, ne'ertheless. In a few hours
The order comes from Frankfort, if these waters
Rise not the higher (and the weather favours
Their quick abatement), and I'll have him safe
Within a dungeon, where he may avouch
His real estate and name; and there's no harm done,
Should he prove other than I deem. This robbery
(Save for the actual loss), is lucky also:
He's poor, and that's suspicious—he's unknown,
And that's defenceless,—true, we have no proofs
Of guilt, but what hath he of innocence?

Were he a man indifferent to my prospects,
In other bearings, I should rather lay
The inculpation on the Hungarian, who
Hath something which I like not; and alone
Of all around, except the intendant, and
The prince's household and my own, had ingress
Familiar to the chamber.

Enter GABOR.

Friend, how fair you?

GABOR.

As those who fare well every where, when they
Have supp'd and slumber'd, no great matter how—
And you, my lord?

STRALENHEIM.

Better in rest than purse:
Mine inn is like to cost me dear.

GABOR.

I heard
Of your late loss: but 'tis a trifle to
One of your order.

STRALENHEIM.

You would hardly think so,
Were the loss yours.

GABOR.

I never had so much
(At once) in my whole life, and therefore am not
Fit to decide. But I came here to seek you.
Your couriers are turn'd back—I have outstript
them,
In my return.

STRALENHEIM.

You!—Why?

GABOR.

I went at day-break,
To watch for the abatement of the river,
As being anxious to resume my journey.
Your messengers were all check'd like myself;
And, seeing the case hopeless, I await
The current's pleasure.

STRALENHEIM.

Would the dogs were in it!
Why did they not, at least, attempt the passage?
I order'd this at all risks.

GABOR.

Could you order
The Oder to divide, as Moses did
The Red Sea (scarcely redder than the flood

Of the swoln stream), and be obey'd, perhaps
They might have ventured.

STRALENHEIM.

I must see to it:
The knaves! the slaves!—but they shall smart for this. [*Exit* STRALENHEIM.

GABOR (*solus*).

There goes my noble, feudal, self-will'd baron!
Epitome of what brave chivalry
The preux chevaliers of the good old times
Have left us. Yesterday he would have given
His lands (if he hath any), and, still dearer,
His sixteen quarterings, for as much fresh air
As would have filled a bladder, while he lay
Gurgling and foaming half way through the window
Of his o'erset and water-logg'd conveyance,
And now he storms at half a dozen wretches
Because they love their lives too! Yet he's right:
'Tis strange they should, when such as he may put them
To hazard at his pleasure. Oh! thou world!
Thou art indeed a melancholy jest! [*Exit* GABOR.

SCENE II.

The Apartment of WERNER, *in the Palace.*

Enter JOSEPHINE *and* ULRIC.

JOSEPHINE.

Stand back, and let me look on thee again!
My Ulric!—my beloved!—can it be—
After twelve years?

ULRIC.

My dearest mother!

JOSEPHINE.

Yes!
My dream is realized—how beautiful—
How more than all I sigh'd for! Heaven receive
A mother's thanks!—a mother's tears of joy!
This is indeed thy work!—At such an hour, too,
He comes not only as a son but saviour.

ULRIC.

If such joy await me, it must double
What I now feel, and lighten, from my heart,
A part of the long debt of duty, not

Of love (for that was ne'er withheld)—forgive me!
This long delay was not my fault.

JOSEPHINE.

I know it,
But cannot think of sorrow now, and doubt
If I e'er felt it, 'tis so dazzled from
My memory, by this oblivious transport!—
My son!

Enter WERNER.

WERNER.

What have we here, more strangers?

JOSEPHINE.

No!
Look upon him! What do you see?

WERNER.

A stripling,
For the first time——

ULRIC (*kneeling*).

For twelve long years, my father!

WERNER.

Oh, God!

JOSEPHINE.

He faints!

WERNER.

No—I am better now—
Ulric! (*Embraces him.*)

ULRIC.

My father, Siegendorf!

WERNER (*starting*).

Hush! boy—
The walls may hear that name!

ULRIC.

What then?

WERNER.

Why, then—
But we will talk of that anon. Remember,
I must be known here but as Werner. Come!
Come to my arms again! Why, thou look'st all
I should have been, and was not. Josephine!
Sure 'tis no father's fondness dazzles me;
But had I seen that form amid ten thousand
Youth of the choicest, my heart would have chosen
This for my son!

ULRIC.

And yet you knew me not!

WERNER.

Alas! I have had that upon my soul

Which makes me look on all men with an eye
That only knows the evil at first glance.

ULRIC.

My memory served me far more fondly: I
Have not forgotten aught; and ofttimes in
The proud and princely halls of—(I'll not name
them,
As you say that 'tis perilous), but i' the pomp
Of your sire's feudal mansion, I look'd back
To the Bohemian mountains many a sunset,
And wept to see another day go down
O'er thee and me, with those huge hills between us.
They shall not part us more.

WERNER.

I know not that.
Are you aware my father is no more?

ULRIC.

Oh heavens! I left him in a green old age,
And looking like the oak, worn, but still steady
Amidst the elements, whilst younger trees
Fell fast around him. 'Twas scarce three months
since.

WERNER.

Why did you leave him?

JOSEPHINE (*embracing* ULRIC).

Can you ask that question?
Is he not *here?*

WERNER.

True; he hath sought his parents,
And found them; but, oh! *how*, and in what state!

ULRIC.

All shall be better'd. What we have to do
Is to proceed, and to assert our rights,
Or rather yours; for I waive all, unless
Your father has disposed in such a sort
Of his broad lands as to make mine the foremost,
So that I must prefer my claim for form:
But I trust better, and that all is yours.

WERNER.

Have you not heard of Stralenheim?

ULRIC.

I saved
His life but yesterday: he's here.

WERNER.

You saved
The serpent who will sting us all!

ULRIC.

You speak
Riddles: what is this *Stralenheim* to us?

WERNER.

Every thing. One who claims our fathers' lands:
Our distant kinsman, and our nearest foe.

ULRIC.

I never heard his name till now. The count,
Indeed, spoke sometimes of a kinsman, who,
If his own line should fail, might be remotely
Involved in the succession; but his titles
Were never named before me—and what then?
His right must yield to ours.

WERNER.

Ay, if at Prague:
But here he is all powerful: and has spread
Snares for thy father, which, if hitherto
He hath escaped them, is by fortune, not
By favour.

ULRIC.

Doth he personally know you?

WERNER.

No; but he guesses shrewdly at my person,
As he betray'd last night; and I, perhaps,

But owe my temporary liberty
To his uncertainty.

ULRIC.

I think you wrong him
(Excuse me for the phrase); but Stralenheim
Is not what you prejudge him, or, if so,
He owes me something both for past and present;
I saved his life, he therefore trusts in me;
He hath been plunder'd too, since he came hither;
Is sick; a stranger; and as such not now
Able to trace the villain who hath robb'd him;
I have pledged myself to do so; and the business
Which brought me here was chiefly that: but I
Have found, in searching for another's dross,
My own whole treasure—you, my parents!

WERNER (*agitatedly*).

Who
Taught you to mouth that name of "villain?"

ULRIC.

What
More noble name belongs to common thieves?

WERNER.

Who taught you thus to brand an unknown being
With an infernal stigma?

ULRIC.

My own feelings
Taught me to name a ruffian from his deeds.

WERNER.

Who taught you, long-sought, and ill-found boy! that
It would be safe for my own son to insult me?

ULRIC.

I named a villain. What is there in common
With such a being and my father?

WERNER.

Every thing!
That ruffian is thy father!

JOSEPHINE.

Oh, my son!
Believe him not—and yet!——(*Her voice falters.*)

ULRIC (*starts, looks earnestly at* WERNER, *and then says slowly*)

And you avow it?

WERNER.

Ulric! before you dare despise your father,
Learn to divine and judge his actions. *Young*,
Rash, new to life, and rear'd in luxury's lap,
Is it for you to measure passion's force,

Or misery's temptation? Wait—(not long,
It cometh like the Night, and quickly)—Wait!—
Wait till, like me, your hopes are blighted—till
Sorrow and shame are handmaids of your cabin;
Famine and poverty your guests at table;
Despair your bed-fellow—then rise, but not
From sleep, and judge! Should that day e'er arrive—
Should you see then the serpent, who hath coil'd
Himself around all that is dear and noble
Of you and yours, lie slumbering in your path,
With but *his* folds between your steps and happiness,
When *he*, who lives but to tear from you name,
Lands, life itself, lies at your mercy, with
Chance your conductor; midnight for your mantle;
The bare knife in your hand, and earth asleep,
Even to your deadliest foe; and he as 'twere
Inviting death, by looking like it, while
His death alone can save you:—Thank your God!
If then, like me, content with petty plunder,
You turn aside——I did so.

ULRIC.

But——

WERNER (*abruptly*).

Hear me!

I will not brook a human voice—scarce dare
Listen to my own (if that be human still)—
Hear me! you do not know this man—I do.
He's mean, deceitful, avaricious. You
Deem yourself safe, as young and brave; but learn
None are secure from desperation, few
From subtilty. My worst foe, Stralenheim,
Housed in a prince's palace, couch'd within
A prince's chamber, lay below my knife!
An instant—a mere motion—the least impulse—
Had swept him and all fears of mine from earth.
He was within my power—my knife was raised—
Withdrawn—and I'm in his:—are you not so?
Who tells you that he knows you *not?* Who says
He hath not lured you here to end you? or
To plunge you, with your parents, in a dungeon?

[*He pauses.*

ULRIC.

Proceed—proceed!

WERNER.

Me he hath ever known,

And hunted through each change of time—name—
fortune—
And why not *you?* Are you more versed in men?
He wound snares round me; flung along my path
Reptiles, whom, in my youth, I would have
spurn'd
Even from my presence; but, in spurning now,
Fill only with fresh venom. Will you be
More patient? Ulric!—Ulric!—there are crimes
Made venial by the occasion, and temptations
Which nature cannot master or forbear.

ULRIC (*looks first at him, and then at* JOSEPHINE).

My mother!

WERNER.

Ay! I thought so: you have now
Only one parent. I have lost alike
Father and son, and stand alone.

ULRIC.

But stay!

[WERNER *rushes out of the chamber.*

JOSEPHINE (*to* ULRIC).

Follow him not, until this storm of passion
Abates. Think'st thou that were it well for him
I had not follow'd?

ULRIC.

I obey you, Mother,
Although reluctantly. My first act shall not
Be one of disobedience.

JOSEPHINE.

Oh! he is good!
Condemn him not from his own mouth, but trust
To me, who have borne so much with him, and for him,
That this is but the surface of his soul,
And that the depth is rich in better things.

ULRIC.

These then are but my father's principles?
My mother thinks not with him?

JOSEPHINE.

Nor doth he
Think as he speaks. Alas! long years of grief
Have made him sometimes thus.

ULRIC.

Explain to me
More clearly, then, these claims of Stralenheim,
That, when I see the subject in its bearings,
I may prepare to face him, or at least
To extricate you from your present perils.

I pledge myself to accomplish this—but would
I had arrived a few hours sooner!

JOSEPHINE.

Ay!

Hadst thou but done so!

Enter GABOR *and* IDENSTEIN *with Attendants.*

GABOR (*to* ULRIC).

I have sought you, comrade.
So this is my reward!

ULRIC.

What do you mean?

GABOR.

'Sdeath! have I lived to these years, and for this?
(*To* IDENSTEIN.) But for your age and folly, I would—

IDENSTEIN.

Help!

Hands off! touch an intendant!

GABOR.

Do not think
I'll honour you so much as save your throat
From the Ravenstone,* by choking you myself.

* The Ravenstone, "Ravenstein," is the *stone gibbet* of Germany, and so called from the ravens perching on it.

IDENSTEIN.

I thank you for the respite; but there are
Those who have greater need of it than me.

ULRIC.

Unriddle this vile wrangling, or—

GABOR.

At once, then,
The baron has been robb'd, and upon me
This worthy personage has deign'd to fix
His kind suspicions—me! whom he ne'er saw
Till yester' evening.

IDENSTEIN.

Wouldst have me suspect
My own acquaintances? You have to learn
That I keep better company.

GABOR.

You shall
Keep the best shortly, and the last for all men—
The worms! you hound of malice!

[GABOR *seizes on him.*

ULRIC (*interfering*).

Nay, no violence:
He's old, unarm'd—be temperate, Gabor!

GABOR (*letting go* IDENSTEIN).

True:

I am a fool to lose myself because
Fools deem me knave: it is their homage.

ULRIC (*to* IDENSTEIN).

How

Fare you?

IDENSTEIN.

Help!

ULRIC.

I *have* help'd you.

IDENSTEIN.

Kill him! then

I'll say so.

GABOR.

I am calm—live on!

IDENSTEIN.

That's more

Than you shall do, if there be judge or judgment
In Germany. The baron shall decide!

GABOR.

Does *he* abet you in your accusation?

IDENSTEIN.

Does he not?

GABOR.

Then next time let him go sink
Ere I go hang for snatching him from drowning.
But here he comes!

Enter STRALENHEIM.

GABOR (*goes up to him*).

My noble lord, I'm here!

STRALENHEIM.

Well, Sir!

GABOR.

Have you aught with me?

STRALENHEIM.

What should I
Have with you?

GABOR.

You know best, if yesterday's
Flood has not wash'd away your memory;
But that's a trifle. I stand here accused,
In phrases not equivocal, by yon
Intendant, of the pillage of your person,
Or chamber—is the charge your own, or his?

STRALENHEIM.

I accuse no man.

GABOR.

Then you acquit me, baron?

STRALENHEIM.

I know not whom to accuse, or to acquit,
Or scarcely to suspect.

GABOR.

But you at least
Should know whom *not* to suspect. I am insulted—
Oppress'd here by these menials, and I look
To you for remedy—teach them their duty!
To look for thieves at home were part of it,
If duly taught: but, in one word, if I
Have an accuser, let it be a man
Worthy to be so of a man like me.
I am your equal.

STRALENHEIM.

You!

GABOR.

Ay, Sir; and for
Aught that you know, superior; but proceed—
I do not ask for hints, and surmises,
And circumstance, and proofs; I know enough

Of what I have done for you, and what you owe me,
To have at least waited your payment rather
Than paid myself, had I been eager of
Your gold. I also know that were I even
The villain I am deem'd, the service render'd
So recently would not permit you to
Pursue me to the death, except through shame,
Such as would leave your scutcheon but a blank.
But this is nothing; I demand of you
Justice upon your unjust servants, and
From your own lips a disavowal of
All sanction of their insolence: thus much
You owe to the unknown, who asks no more,
And never thought to have ask'd so much.

STRALENHEIM.

This tone
May be of innocence.

GABOR.

'Sdeath! who dare doubt it,
Except such villains as ne'er had it?

STRALENHEIM.

You
Are hot, Sir.

GABOR.

Must I turn an icicle
Before the breath of menials, and their master?

STRALENHEIM.

Ulric! you know this man; I found him in
Your company.

GABOR.

We found *you* in the Oder:
Would we had left you there!

STRALENHEIM.

I give you thanks, Sir.

GABOR.

I've earn'd them; but might have earn'd more
from others,
Perchance, if I had left you to your fate.

STRALENHEIM.

Ulric! you know this man?

GABOR.

No more than you do,
If he avouches not my honour.

ULRIC.

I
Can vouch your courage, and, as far as my
Own brief connexion led me, honour.

STRALENHEIM.

Then

I'm satisfied.

GABOR (*ironically*).

Right easily, methinks.

What is the spell in his asseveration

More than in mine?

STRALENHEIM.

I merely said that *I*

Was satisfied—not that you were absolved.

GABOR.

Again! Am I accused or no?

STRALENHEIM.

Go to!

You wax too insolent: if circumstance

And general suspicion be against you,

Is the fault mine? Is't not enough that I

Decline all question of your guilt or innocence?

GABOR.

My lord, my lord, this is mere cozenage;

A vile equivocation: you well know

Your doubts are certainties to all around you—

Your looks, a voice—your frowns, a sentence; you

Are practising your power on me—because

You have it; but beware, you know not whom
You strive to tread on.

STRALENHEIM.

Threat'st thou?

GABOR.

Not so much
As you accuse. You hint the basest injury,
And I retort it with an open warning.

STRALENHEIM.

As you have said, 'tis true I owe you something,
For which you seem disposed to pay yourself.

GABOR.

Not with your gold.

STRALENHEIM.

With bootless insolence.
[*To his Attendants and* IDENSTEIN.
You need not further to molest this man,
But let him go his way. Ulric, good morrow!
[*Exit* STRALENHEIM, IDENSTEIN, *and Attendants*.

GABOR (*following*).

I'll after him, and——

ULRIC (*stopping him*).

Not a step.

GABOR.

Who shall
Oppose me?

ULRIC.

Your own reason, with a moment's
Thought.

GABOR.

Must I bear this?

ULRIC.

Pshaw! we all must bear
The arrogance of something higher than
Ourselves—the highest cannot temper Satan,
Nor the lowest his vicegerents upon earth.
I've seen you brave the elements, and bear
Things which had made this silk-worm cast his skin—
And shrink you from a few sharp sneers and words?

GABOR.

Must I bear to be deem'd a thief? If 'twere
A bandit of the woods, I could have borne it—
There's something daring in it—but to steal
The monies of a slumbering man!—

ULRIC.

It seems, then,
You are *not* guilty?

GABOR.

Do I hear aright?
You, too!

ULRIC.

I merely ask'd a simple question.

GABOR.

If the judge ask'd me—I would answer "No"—
To you I answer *thus*. [*He draws.*

ULRIC (*drawing*).

With all my heart!

JOSEPHINE.

Without there! Ho! help! help!—Oh, God!
here's murder! [*Exit* JOSEPHINE, *shrieking.*

GABOR *and* ULRIC *fight.* GABOR *is disarmed just as* STRALENHEIM, JOSEPHINE, IDENSTEIN, *etc. re-enter.*

JOSEPHINE.

Oh! glorious Heaven! He's safe!

STRALENHEIM (*to* JOSEPHINE).

Who's safe?

JOSEPHINE.

My——

ULRIC (*interrupting her with a stern look, and turning afterwards to* STRALENHEIM).

Both!

Here's no great harm done.

STRALENHEIM.

What hath caused all this?

ULRIC.

You, Baron, I believe; but as the effect
Is harmless, let it not disturb you.—Gabor!
There is your sword; and when you bare it next,
Let it not be against your *friends.*

[ULRIC *pronounces the last words slowly and emphatically in a low voice to* GABOR.

GABOR.

I thank you
Less for my life than for your counsel.

STRALENHEIM.

These
Brawls must end here.

GABOR (*taking his sword*).

They *shall.* You have wrong'd me, Ulric,
More with your unkind thoughts than sword; I would
The last were in my bosom rather than

The first in yours. I could have borne yon noble's
Absurd insinuations—Ignorance
And dull suspicion are a part of his
Intail will last him longer than his lands.—
But I may fit *him* yet:—you have vanquish'd me.
I was the fool of passion to conceive
That I could cope with you whom I had seen
Already proved by greater perils than
Rest in this arm. We may meet by and by,
However—but in friendship. [*Exit* GABOR.

STRALENHEIM.

I will brook
No more! This outrage following up his insults,
Perhaps his guilt, has cancell'd all the little
I owed him heretofore for the so vaunted
Aid which he added to your abler succour.
Ulric, you are not hurt?—

ULRIC.

Not even by a scratch.

STRALENHEIM (*to* IDENSTEIN).

Intendant! take your measures to secure
Yon fellow: I revoke my former lenity.
He shall be sent to Frankfort with an escort
The instant that the waters have abated.

IDENSTEIN.

Secure him! he hath got his sword again—
And seems to know the use on't; 'tis his trade,
Belike:—I'm a civilian.

STRALENHEIM.

Fool! are not
Yon score of vassals dogging at your heels
Enough to seize a dozen such? Hence! after him!

ULRIC.

Baron, I do beseech you!

STRALENHEIM.

I must be
Obey'd. No words!

IDENSTEIN.

Well, if it must be so—
March, vassals! I'm your leader—and will bring
The rear up: a wise general never should
Expose his precious life—on which all rests.
I like that article of war.

[*Exit* IDENSTEIN *and Attendants.*

STRALENHEIM.

Come hither,
Ulric:—what does that woman here? Oh! now

I recognise her, 'tis the stranger's wife
Whom they *name* "Werner."

ULRIC.

'Tis his name.

STRALENHEIM.

Indeed!
Is not your husband visible, fair dame?

JOSEPHINE.

Who seeks him?

STRALENHEIM.

No one—for the present: but
I fain would parley, Ulric, with yourself
Alone.

ULRIC.

I will retire with you.

JOSEPHINE.

Not so.
You are the latest stranger, and command
All places here.
(*Aside to* ULRIC *as she goes out*). Oh! Ulric, have
a care—
Remember what depends on a rash word!

ULRIC (*to* JOSEPHINE).

Fear not!—

[*Exit* JOSEPHINE.

STRALENHEIM.

Ulric, I think that I may trust you?
You saved my life—and acts like these beget
Unbounded confidence.

ULRIC.

Say on.

STRALENHEIM.

Mysterious
And long engender'd circumstances (not
To be now fully enter'd on) have made
This man obnoxious—perhaps fatal to me.

ULRIC.

Who? Gabor, the Hungarian?

STRALENHEIM.

No—this "Werner"—
With the false name and habit.

ULRIC.

How can this be?
He is the poorest of the poor—and yellow
Sickness sits cavern'd in his hollow eye:
The man is helpless.

STRALENHEIM.

He is—'tis no matter—
But if he be the man I deem (and that

He is so, all around us here—and much
That is not here—confirm my apprehension),
He must be made secure, ere twelve hours further.

ULRIC.

And what have I to do with this?

STRALENHEIM.

I have sent
To Frankfort, to the governor, my friend—
(I have the authority to do so by
An order of the house of Brandenburgh)
For a fit escort—but this cursed flood
Bars all access, and may do for some hours.

ULRIC.

It is abating.

STRALENHEIM.

That is well.

ULRIC.

But how
Am I concern'd?

STRALENHEIM.

As one who did so much
For me, you cannot be indifferent to
That which is of more import to me than
The life you rescued.—Keep your eye on *him!*

The man avoids me, knows that I now know
him.—
Watch him!—as you would watch the wild boar
when
He makes against you in the hunter's gap—
Like him he must be spear'd.

ULRIC.

Why so?

STRALENHEIM.

He stands
Between me and a brave inheritance.
Oh! could you see it! But you shall.

ULRIC.

I hope so.

STRALENHEIM.

It is the richest of the rich Bohemia,
Unscathed by scorching war. It lies so near
The strongest city, Prague, that fire and sword
Have skimm'd it lightly: so that now, besides
Its own exuberance, it bears double value
Confronted with whole realms afar and near
Made deserts.

ULRIC.

You describe it faithfully.

STRALENHEIM.

Ay—could you see it, you would say so—but,
As I have said, you shall.

ULRIC.

I accept the omen.

STRALENHEIM.

Then claim a recompense from it and me,
Such as *both* may make worthy your acceptance
And services to me and mine for ever.

ULRIC.

And this sole, sick, and miserable wretch—
This way-worn stranger—stands between you and
This Paradise?—(As Adam did between
The devil and his.)—[*Aside.*]

STRALENHEIM.

He doth.

ULRIC.

Hath he no right?

STRALENHEIM.

Right! none. A disinherited prodigal,
Who for these twenty years disgraced his lineage
In all his acts—but chiefly by his marriage,
And living amidst commerce-fetching burghers,
And dabbling merchants, in a mart of Jews.

ULRIC.

He has a wife, then?

STRALENHEIM.

You'd be sorry to
Call such your mother. You have seen the woman
He *calls* his wife.

ULRIC.

Is she not so?

STRALENHEIM.

No more
Than he's your father:—an Italian girl,
The daughter of a banish'd man, who lives
On love and poverty with this same Werner.

ULRIC.

They are childless, then?

STRALENHEIM.

There is or was a bastard,
Whom the old man—the grandsire (as old age
Is ever doting) took to warm his bosom,
As it went chilly downward to the grave:
But the Imp stands not in my path—he has fled,
No one knows whither; and if he had not,

His claims alone were too contemptible
To stand.——Why do you smile?

ULRIC.

At your vain fears:
A poor man almost in his grasp—a child
Of doubtful birth—can startle a grandee!

STRALENHEIM.

All's to be fear'd, where all is to be gain'd.

ULRIC.

True; and aught done to save or to obtain it.

STRALENHEIM.

You have harp'd the very string next to my heart.
I may depend upon you?

ULRIC.

'Twere too late
To doubt it.

STRALENHEIM.

Let no foolish pity shake
Your bosom (for the appearance of the man
Is pitiful)—he is a wretch, as likely
To have robb'd me as the fellow more suspected,
Except that circumstance is less against him;
He being lodged far off, and in a chamber

Without approach to mine; and, to say truth,
I think too well of blood allied to mine,
To deem he would descend to such an act;
Besides, he was a soldier, and a brave one
Once—though too rash.

ULRIC.

And they, my lord, we know
By our experience, never plunder till
They knock the brains out first—which makes them heirs,
Not thieves. The dead, who feel nought, can lose nothing,
Nor e'er be robb'd: their spoils are a bequest—
No more.

STRALENHEIM.

Go to! you are a wag. But say
I may be sure you'll keep an eye on this man,
And let me know his slightest movement towards
Concealment or escape?

ULRIC.

You may be sure
You yourself could not watch him more than I
Will be his sentinel.

STRALENHEIM.

By this, you make me

Yours, and for ever.

ULRIC.

Such is my intention.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A Hall in the same Palace, from whence the secret Passage leads.

Enter WERNER *and* GABOR.

GABOR.

Sir, I have told my tale; if it so please you
To give me refuge for a few hours, well—
If not—I'll try my fortune elsewhere.

WERNER.

How
Can I, so wretched, give to Misery
A shelter?—wanting such myself as much
As e'er the hunted deer a covert——

GABOR.

Or
The wounded lion his cool cave. Methinks
You rather look like one would turn at bay,
And rip the hunter's entrails.

WERNER.

Ah?

GABOR.

I care not
If it be so, being much disposed to do
The same myself; but will you shelter me?
I am oppress'd like you—and poor like you—
Disgraced——

WERNER (*abruptly*).

Who told you that I was disgraced?

GABOR.

No one; nor did I say *you* were so: with
Your poverty my likeness ended; but
I said *I* was so—and would add, with truth,
As undeservedly as *you*.

WERNER.

Again!
As *I*?

GABOR.

Or any other honest man.
What the devil would you have? You don't believe me
Guilty of this base theft?

WERNER.

No, no—I cannot.

GABOR.

Why, that's my heart of honour! yon young gallant—
Your miserly intendant and dense noble—
All—all suspected me; and why? because
I am the worst-clothed and least named amongst them,
Although, were Momus' lattice in our breasts,
My soul might brook to open it more widely
Than theirs; but thus it is—you poor and helpless—
Both still more than myself.

WERNER.

How know you that?

GABOR.

You're right; I ask for shelter at the hand
Which I call helpless; if you now deny it,
I were well paid. But you, who seem to have proved
The wholesome bitterness of life, know well,
By sympathy, that all the outspread gold
Of the New World, the Spaniard boasts about,
Could never tempt the man who knows its worth,
Weigh'd at its proper value in the balance,

Save in such guise (and there I grant its power,
Because I feel it) as may leave no night-mare
Upon his heart o'nights.

WERNER.

What do you mean?

GABOR.

Just what I say; I thought my speech was plain:
You are no thief—nor I—and, as true men,
Should aid each other.

WERNER.

It is a damned world, sir.

GABOR.

So is the nearest of the two next, as
The priests say (and no doubt they should know best),
Therefore I'll stick by this—as being loth
To suffer martyrdom, at least with such
An epitaph as larceny upon my tomb.
It is but a night's lodging which I crave;
To-morrow I will try the waters, as
The Dove did, trusting that they have abated.

WERNER.

Abated? Is there hope of that?

GABOR.

There was
At noontide.

WERNER.

Then we may be safe.

GABOR.

Are *you*
In peril?

WERNER.

Poverty is ever so.

GABOR.

That I know by long practice. Will you not
Promise to make mine less?

WERNER.

Your poverty?

GABOR.

No—you don't look a leech for that disorder;
I meant my peril only: you've a roof,
And I have none; I merely seek a covert.

WERNER.

Rightly; for how should such a wretch as I
Have gold?

GABOR.

Scarce honestly, to say the truth on't,
Although I almost wish you had the baron's.

WERNER.

Dare you insinuate?

GABOR.

What?

WERNER.

Are you aware
To whom you speak?

GABOR.

No; and I am not used
Greatly to care. (*A noise heard without.*) But hark! they come!

WERNER.

Who come?

GABOR.

The intendant and his man-hounds after me:
I'd face them—but it were in vain to expect
Justice at hands like theirs. Where shall I go?
But show me any place. I do assure you,
If there be faith in man, I am most guiltless:
Think if it were your own case!

WERNER (*aside*).

Oh, just God!
Thy hell is not hereafter! Am I dust still?

GABOR.

I see you're moved; and it shows well in you:
I may live to requite it.

WERNER.

Are you not
A spy of Stralenheim's?

GABOR.

Not I! and if
I were, what is there to espy in you:
Although I recollect his frequent question
About you and your spouse, might lead to some
Suspicion; but you best know—what—and why:
I am his deadliest foe.

WERNER.

You?

GABOR.

After such
A treatment for the service which in part
I render'd him—I am his enemy;
If you are not his friend, you will assist me.

WERNER.

I will.

GABOR.

But how?

Enter IDENSTEIN, *and Others.*

IDENSTEIN.

Is he not here? He must have vanish'd then
Through the dim Gothic glass by pious aid
Of pictured saints, upon the red and yellow
Casements, through which the sunset streams like sunrise
On long pearl-colour'd beards and crimson crosses,
And gilded crosiers, and cross'd arms, and cowls,
And helms, and twisted armour, and long swords,
All the fantastic furniture of windows,
Dim with brave knights and holy hermits, whose
Likeness and fame alike rest on some panes
Of crystal, which each rattling wind proclaims
As frail as any other life or glory.
He's gone, however.

WERNER.

Whom do you seek?

IDENSTEIN.

A villain!

WERNER.

Why need you come so far, then?

IDENSTEIN.

In the search
Of him who robb'd the baron.

WERNER.

Are you sure
You have divined the man?

IDENSTEIN.

As sure as you
Stand there; but where's he gone?

WERNER.

Who?

IDENSTEIN.

He we sought.

WERNER.

You see he is not here.

IDENSTEIN.

And yet we traced him
Up to this hall: are you accomplices,
Or deal you in the black art?

WERNER.

I deal plainly,
To many men the blackest.

IDENSTEIN.

It may be

I have a question or two for yourself
Hereafter; but we must continue now
Our search for t'other.

WERNER.

You had best begin
Your inquisition now; I may not be
So patient always.

IDENSTEIN.

I should like to know,
In good sooth, if you really are the man
That Stralenheim's in quest of?

WERNER.

Insolent!
Said you not that he was not here?

IDENSTEIN.

Yes, *one;*
But there's another whom he tracks more keenly,
And soon, it may be, with authority
Both paramount to his and mine. But, come!
Bustle, my boys! we are at fault.

[*Exit* IDENSTEIN *and Attendants.*

WERNER.

In what
A maze hath my dim destiny involved me!

And one base sin hath done me less ill than
The leaving undone one far greater. Down,
Thou busy devil! rising in my heart!
Thou art too late! I'll nought to do with blood.

Enter ULRIC.

ULRIC.

I sought you, father.

WERNER.

Is't not dangerous?

ULRIC.

No; Stralenheim is ignorant of all
Or any of the ties between us: more—
He sends me here a spy upon your actions,
Deeming me wholly his.

WERNER.

I cannot think it:
'Tis but a snare he winds about us both,
To swoop the sire and son at once.

ULRIC.

I cannot
Pause in each petty fear, and stumble at
The doubts that rise like briars in our path,
But must break through them, as an unarm'd carle

Would, though with naked limbs, were the wolf rustling
In the same thicket where he hew'd for bread:
Nets are for thrushes, eagles are not caught so;
We'll overfly, or rend them.

WERNER.

Show me *how?*

ULRIC.

Can you not guess?

WERNER.

I cannot.

ULRIC.

That is strange.
Came the thought ne'er into your mind *last night?*

WERNER.

I understand you not.

ULRIC.

Then we shall never
More understand each other. But to change
The topic——

WERNER.

You mean, to *pursue* it, as
'Tis of our safety.

ULRIC.

Right; I stand corrected.
I see the subject now more clearly, and
Our general situation in its bearings.
The waters are abating; a few hours
Will bring his summon'd myrmidons from Frankfort,
When you will be a prisoner, perhaps worse,
And I an outcast, bastardized by practice
Of this same baron to make way for him.

WERNER.

And now your remedy! I thought to escape
By means of this accursed gold, but now
I dare not use it, show it, scarce look on it.
Methinks it wears upon its face my guilt
For motto, not the mintage of the state;
And, for the sovereign's head, my own begirt
With hissing snakes, which curl around my temples,
And cry to all beholders—lo! a villain!

ULRIC.

You must not use it, at least, now; but take
This ring. [*He gives* WERNER *a jewel.*

WERNER.

A gem! It was my father's!

ULRIC.

And

As such is now your own. With this you must
Bribe the Intendant for his old calèche
And horses to pursue your route at sunrise,
Together with my mother.

WERNER.

And leave you,

So lately found, in peril too?

ULRIC.

Fear nothing!

The only fear were if we fled together,
For that would make our ties beyond all doubt.
The waters only lie in flood between
This burgh and Frankfort; so far's in our favour.
The route on to Bohemia, though encumber'd,
Is not impassable; and when you gain
A few hours' start, the difficulties will be
The same to your pursuers. Once beyond
The frontier, and you're safe.

WERNER.

My noble boy!

ULRIC.

Hush! hush! no transports: we'll indulge in them
In Castle Siegendorf! Display no gold:
Show Idenstein the gem (I know the man,
And have look'd through him): it will answer thus
A double purpose. Stralenheim lost *gold*—
No jewel: therefore, it could *not* be his;
And then, the man who was possess'd of this
Can hardly be suspected of abstracting
The baron's coin, when he could thus convert
This ring to more than Stralenheim has lost
By his last night's slumber. Be not over timid
In your address, nor yet too arrogant,
And Idenstein will serve you.

WERNER.

I will follow
In all things your direction.

ULRIC.

I would have
Spared you the trouble; but had I appear'd
To take an interest in you, and still more
By dabbling with a jewel in your favour,
All had been known at once.

WERNER.

My guardian angel!
This overpays the past. But how wilt thou
Fare in our absence?

ULRIC.

Stralenheim knows nothing
Of me as aught of kindred with yourself.
I will but wait a day or two with him
To lull all doubts, and then rejoin my father.

WERNER.

To part no more!

ULRIC.

I know not that; but at
The least we'll meet again once more.

WERNER.

My boy!
My friend—my only child, and sole preserver!
Oh, do not hate me!

ULRIC.

Hate my father!

WERNER.

Ay,
My father hated me: why not my son?

ULRIC.

Your father knew you not as I do.

WERNER.

Scorpions
Are in thy words! Thou know me? in this guise
Thou canst not know me, I am not myself,
Yet (hate me not) I will be soon.

ULRIC.

I'll *wait!*
In the mean time be sure that all a son
Can do for parents shall be done for mine.

WERNER.

I see it, and I feel it, yet I feel
Further—that you despise me.

ULRIC.

Wherefore should I?

WERNER.

Must I repeat my humiliation?

ULRIC.

No!
I have fathom'd it and you. But let us talk
Of this no more. Or if it must be ever,
Not *now;* your error has redoubled all
The present difficulties of our house,

At secret war with that of Stralenheim;
All we have now to think of, is to baffle
Him. I have shown *one* way.

WERNER.

The only one,
And I embrace it, as I did my son,
Who show'd *himself* and father's *safety* in
One day.

ULRIC.

You *shall* be safe: let that suffice.
Would Stralenheim's appearance in Bohemia
Disturb your right, or mine, if once we were
Admitted to our lands?

WERNER.

Assuredly,
Situate as we are now, although the first
Possessor might, as usual, prove the strongest,
Especially the next in blood.

ULRIC.

Blood! 'tis
A word of many meanings; in the veins
And out of them it is a different thing—
And so it should be, when the same in blood
(As it is call'd) are aliens to each other,

Like Theban brethren: when a part is bad,
A few spilt ounces purify the rest.

WERNER.

I do not apprehend you.

ULRIC.

That may be—
And should, perhaps,—and yet—but get ye ready;
You and my mother must away to-night.
Here comes the Intendant; sound him with the gem,
'Twill sink into his venal soul like lead
Into the deep, and bring up slime, and mud,
And ooze, too, from the bottom, as the lead doth
With its greased understratum; but no less
Will serve to warn our vessels through these shoals.
The freight is rich, so heave the line in time!
Farewell! I scarce have time, but yet your *hand*,
My father!——

WERNER.

Let me embrace thee!

ULRIC.

We may be
Observed: subdue your nature to the hour!
Keep off from me as from your foe!

WERNER.

Accursed
Be he, who is the stifling cause, which smothers
The best and sweetest feeling of our hearts,
At such an hour too!

ULRIC.

Yes, curse—it will ease you!
Here is the Intendant.

Enter IDENSTEIN.

Master Idenstein,
How fare you in your purpose? Have you caught
The rogue?

IDENSTEIN.

No, faith!

ULRIC.

Well, there are plenty more:
You may have better luck another chase.
Where is the baron?

IDENSTEIN.

Gone back to his chamber:
And now I think on't, asking after you
With nobly-born impatience.

ULRIC.

Your great men

Must be answer'd on the instant, as the bound
Of the stung steed replies unto the spur:
'Tis well they have horses, too; for if they had not,
I fear that men must draw their chariots, as
They say kings did Sesostris.

IDENSTEIN.

Who was he?

ULRIC.

An old Bohemian—an imperial gipsy.

IDENSTEIN.

A gipsy or Bohemian, 'tis the same,
For they pass by both names. And was he one?

ULRIC.

I've heard so; but I must take leave. Intendant,
Your servant!—Werner (*to* WERNER, *slightly*), if that be your name,
Yours. [*Exit* ULRIC.

IDENSTEIN.

A well-spoken, pretty-faced young man!
And prettily behaved! He knows his station,
You see, sir: how he gave to each his due
Precedence!

WERNER.

I perceived it, and applaud
His just discernment and your own.

IDENSTEIN.

That's well—
That's very well. You also know your place, too,
And yet I don't know that I know your place.

WERNER (*showing the ring*).

Would this assist your knowledge?

IDENSTEIN.

How!—What!—Eh!
A jewel!

WERNER.

'Tis your own, on one condition.

IDENSTEIN.

Mine!—Name it!

WERNER.

That hereafter you permit me
At thrice its value to redeem it; 'tis
A family ring.

IDENSTEIN.

A family! *yours!* a gem!
I'm breathless!

WERNER.

You must also furnish me,
An hour ere daybreak, with all means to quit
This place.

IDENSTEIN.

But is it real? let me look on it:
Diamond, by all that's glorious!

WERNER.

Come, I'll trust you;
You have guess'd, no doubt, that I was born above
My present seeming.

IDENSTEIN.

I can't say I did,
Though this looks like it; this is the true breeding
Of gentle blood!

WERNER.

I have important reasons
For wishing to continue privily
My journey hence.

IDENSTEIN.

So then *you are* the man
Whom Stralenheim's in quest of?

WERNER.

I am not;

But being taken for him might conduct
So much embarrassment to me just now,
And to the baron's self hereafter—'tis
To spare both, that I would avoid all bustle.

IDENSTEIN.

Be you the man or no, 'tis not my business;
Besides, I never should obtain the half
From this proud, niggardly noble, who would raise
The country for some missing bits of coin,
And never offer a precise reward—
But *this!* Another look!

WERNER.

Gaze on it freely;
At day-dawn it is yours.

IDENSTEIN.

Oh, thou sweet sparkler!
Thou more than stone of the philosopher!
Thou touchstone of Philosophy herself!
Thou bright eye of the Mine! thou load-star of
The soul! the true magnetic Pole to which
All hearts point duly north, like trembling needles!
Thou flaming Spirit of the Earth! which, sitting
High on the monarch's diadem, attractest

More worship than the Majesty who sweats
Beneath the crown which makes his head ache, like
Millions of hearts which bleed to lend it lustre!
Shalt thou be mine? I am, methinks, already
A little king, a lucky alchymist!—
A wise magician, who has bound the devil
Without the forfeit of his soul. But come,
Werner, or what else?

WERNER.

Call me Werner still,
You may yet know me by a loftier title.

IDENSTEIN.

I do believe in thee! thou art the spirit
Of whom I long have dream'd, in a low garb.—
But come, I'll serve thee; thou shalt be as free
As air, despite the waters: let us hence,
I'll show thee I am honest—(oh, thou jewel!)
Thou shalt be furnished, Werner, with such means
Of flight, that if thou wert a snail, not birds
Should overtake thee.—Let me gaze again!
I have a foster-brother in the mart
Of Hamburg, skill'd in precious stones—how many
Carats may it weigh?—Come, Werner, I will wing
thee. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

STRALENHEIM'S *Chamber.*

STRALENHEIM *and* FRITZ.

FRITZ.

All's ready, my good lord!

STRALENHEIM.

I am not sleepy,
And yet I must to bed; I fain would say
To rest, but something heavy on my spirit,
Too dull for wakefulness, too quick for slumber,
Sits on me as a cloud along the sky,
Which will not let the sunbeams through, nor yet
Descend in rain and end, but spreads itself
'Twixt earth and heaven, like envy between man
And man, an everlasting mist;—I will
Unto my pillow.

FRITZ.

May you rest there well!

STRALENHEIM.

I feel, and fear, I shall.

FRITZ.

And wherefore fear?

STRALENHEIM.

I know not why, and therefore do fear more,
Because an undescribable——'but tis
All folly. Were the locks (as I desired)
Changed to-day, of this chamber? for last night's
Adventure makes it needful.

FRITZ.

Certainly,
According to your order, and beneath
The inspection of myself and the young Saxon
Who saved your life. I think they call him
"Ulric."

STRALENHEIM.

You *think!* you supercilious slave! what right
Have you to *tax your* memory, which should be
Quick, proud, and happy to retain the *name*
Of him who saved your master, as a litany
Whose daily repetition marks your duty—
Get hence! "*you think*," indeed! you, who stood still
Howling and dripping on the bank, whilst I
Lay dying, and the stranger dash'd aside
The roaring torrent, and restored me to

Thank him—and despise you. "*You think!*" and scarce
Can recollect his name! I will not waste
More words on you. Call me betimes.

FRITZ.

Good night!
I trust to-morrow will restore your lordship
To renovated strength and temper.

[*The scene closes.*

SCENE III.

The secret Passage.

GABOR, *solus.*

Four—
Five—six hours have I counted, like the guard
Of outposts, on the never-merry clock:
That hollow tongue of time, which, even when
It sounds for joy, takes something from enjoyment
With every clang. 'Tis a perpetual knell,
Though for a marriage feast it rings: each stroke
Peals for a hope the less; the funeral note
Of Love deep-buried without resurrection
In the grave of Possession; while the knoll

Of long-lived parents finds a jovial echo
To triple Time in the sons' ear.
I'm cold—
I'm dark—I've blown my fingers—number'd o'er
And o'er my steps—and knock'd my head against
Some fifty buttresses—and roused the rats
And bats in general insurrection, till
Their cursed pattering feet and whirring wings
Leave me scarce hearing for another sound.
A light! It is at distance (if I can
Measure in darkness distance): but it blinks
As through a crevice or a key-hole, in
The inhibited direction; I must on,
Nevertheless, from curiosity.
A distant lamp-light is an incident
In such a den as this. Pray Heaven it lead me
To nothing that may tempt me! Else—Heaven aid me
To obtain or to escape it! Shining still!
Were it the Star of Lucifer himself,
Or he himself girt with its beams, I could
Contain no longer. Softly! mighty well!
That corner's turn'd—So—Ah! no;—right! it draws
Nearer. Here is a darksome angle—so,

That's weather'd.—Let me pause.—Suppose it leads
Into some greater danger than that which
I have escaped?—no matter, 'tis a new one;
And novel perils, like fresh mistresses,
Wear more magnetic aspects:—I will on,
And be it where it may—I have my dagger,
Which may protect me at a pinch.—Burn still,
Thou little light! Thou art my *ignis fatuus!*
My stationary Will o' the wisp!—So! so!
He hears my invocation, and fails not.

[*The scene closes.*

SCENE IV.

A Garden.

Enter WERNER.

I could not sleep—and now the hour's at hand;
All's ready. Idenstein has kept his word:
And, stationed in the outskirts of the town,
Upon the forest's edge, the vehicle
Awaits us. Now the dwindling stars begin
To pale in Heaven; and for the last time I
Look on these horrible walls. Oh! never, never

Shall I forget them. Here I came most poor,
But not dishonour'd: and I leave them with
A stain,—if not upon my name, yet in
My heart! A never-dying canker-worm,
Which all the coming splendour of the lands,
And rights, and sovereignty of Siegendorf,
Can scarcely lull a moment: I must find
Some means of restitution, which would ease
My soul in part; but how, without discovery?—
It must be done, however; and I'll pause
Upon the method the first hour of safety.
The madness of my misery led to this
Base infamy; Repentance must retrieve it:
I will have nought of Stralenheim's upon
My spirit, though he would grasp all of mine;
Lands, freedom, life,—and yet he sleeps! as soundly,
Perhaps, as infancy, with gorgeous curtains
Spread for his canopy, o'er silken pillows,
Such as when—Hark! what noise is that? Again!
The branches shake; and some loose stones have fallen
From yonder terrace.

[ULRIC *leaps down from the terrace.*

Ulric! ever welcome!
Thrice welcome now! this filial——

ULRIC.

Stop! before
We approach, tell me——

WERNER.

Why look you so?

ULRIC.

Do I
Behold my father, or——

WERNER.

What?

ULRIC.

An assassin!

WERNER.

Insane or insolent!

ULRIC.

Reply, sir, as
You prize your life, or mine!

WERNER.

To what must I
Answer?

ULRIC.

Are you or are you not the assassin
Of Strale

WERNER.

I never was as yet
The murderer of any man. What mean you?

ULRIC.

Did you not *this* night (as the night before)
Retrace the secret passage? Did you not
Again revisit Stralenheim's chamber? and—

[ULRIC *pauses.*

WERNER.

Proceed.

ULRIC.

Died he not by your hand?

WERNER.

Great God!

ULRIC.

You are innocent, then! my father's innocent!
Embrace me! Yes,—your tone—your look—yes, yes,—
Yet *say* so!

WERNER.

If I e'er, in heart or mind,
Conceived deliberately such a thought,
But rather strove to trample back to hell
Such thoughts—if e'er they glared a moment through

The irritation of my oppressed spirit—
May Heaven be shut for ever from my hopes
As from mine eyes!

ULRIC.

But Stralenheim is dead.

WERNER.

'Tis horrible! 'tis hideous, as 'tis hateful!—
But what have I to do with this?

ULRIC.

No bolt
Is forced; no violence can be detected,
Save on his body. Part of his own household
Have been alarm'd; but, as the Intendant is
Absent, I took upon myself the care
Of mustering the police. His chamber has,
Past doubt, been enter'd secretly. Excuse me,
If nature——

WERNER.

Oh, my boy! what unknown woes
Of dark fatality, like clouds, are gathering
Above our house!

ULRIC.

My father, I acquit you!

But will the world do so? Will even the judge,
If——but you must away this instant.

WERNER.

No!
I'll face it. Who shall dare suspect me?

ULRIC.

Yet
You had *no* guests—*no* visitors—no life
Breathing around you, save my mother's?

WERNER.

Ah!
The Hungarian!

ULRIC.

He is gone! he disappear'd
Ere sunset.

WERNER.

No; I hid him in that very
Conceal'd and fatal gallery.

ULRIC.

There I'll find him.

[ULRIC *is going*.

WERNER.

It is too late: he had left the palace ere
I quitted it. I found the secret pannel

Open, and the doors which lead from that hall
Which masks it: I but thought he had snatch'd
the silent
And favourable moment to escape
The myrmidons of Idenstein, who were
Dogging him yester-even.

ULRIC.

You re-closed
The pannel?

WERNER.

Yes; and not without reproach
(And inner trembling for the avoided peril)
At his dull heedlessness, in leaving thus
His shelterer's asylum to the risk
Of a discovery.

ULRIC.

You are sure you closed it?

WERNER.

Certain.

ULRIC.

That's well; but had been better if
You ne'er had turn'd it to a den for—[*He pauses.*

WERNER.

Thieves!

Thou wouldst say: I must bear it, and deserve it;
But not——

ULRIC.

No, father; do not speak of this;
This is no hour to think of petty crimes,
But to prevent the consequence of great ones.
Why would you shelter this man?

WERNER.

Could I shun it?
A man pursued by my chief foe; disgraced
For my own crime; a victim to *my* safety,
Imploring a few hours' concealment from
The very wretch who was the cause he needed
Such refuge. Had he been a wolf, I could not
Have, in such circumstances, thrust him forth.

ULRIC.

And like the wolf he hath repaid you. But
It is too late to ponder this: you must
Set out ere dawn. I will remain here to
Trace out the murderer, if 'tis possible.

WERNER.

But this my sudden flight will give the Moloch
Suspicion: two new victims, in the lieu

Of one, if I remain. The fled Hungarian,
Who seems the culprit, and——

ULRIC.

Who *seems*? *Who* else
Can be so?

WERNER.

Not *I*, though just now you doubted—
You, my *son!*—doubted——

ULRIC.

And do you doubt of him
The fugitive?

WERNER.

Boy! since I fell into
The abyss of crime (though not of *such* crime), I
Having seen the innocent oppress'd for me,
May doubt even of the guilty's guilt. Your heart
Is free, and quick with virtuous wrath to accuse
Appearances; and views a criminal
In innocence's shadow, it may be,
Because 'tis dusky.

ULRIC.

And if I do so,
What will mankind, who know you not, or knew

But to oppress? You must not stand the hazard.
Away!—I'll make all easy. Idenstein
Will for his own sake and his jewel's hold
His peace—he also is a partner in
Your flight—moreover——

WERNER.

Fly! and leave my name
Link'd with the Hungarian's, or preferr'd, as poorest,
To bear the brand of bloodshed?

ULRIC.

Pshaw! leave any thing
Except our fathers' sovereignty and castles,
For which you have so long panted and in vain!
What *name?* You leave *no name*, since that you bear
Is feign'd.

WERNER.

Most true; but still I would not have it
Engraved in crimson in men's memories,
Though in this most obscure abode of men—
Besides, the search——

ULRIC.

I will provide against

Aught that can touch you. No one knows you
here
As heir of Siegendorf: if Idenstein
Suspects, 'tis *but suspicion*, and he is
A fool: his folly shall have such employment,
Too, that the unknown Werner shall give way
To nearer thoughts of self. The laws (if e'er
Laws reach'd this village) are all in abeyance
With the late general war of thirty years,
Or crush'd, or rising slowly from the dust,
To which the march of armies trampled them.
Stralenheim, although noble, is unheeded
Here, save as *such*—without lands, influence,
Save what hath perish'd with him; few prolong
A week beyond their funeral rites their sway
O'er men, unless by relatives, whose interest
Is roused: such is not here the case; he died
Alone, unknown,—a solitary grave,
Obscure as his deserts, without a scutcheon,
Is all he'll have, or wants. If *I* discover
The assassin, 'twill be well—if not, believe me
None else; though all the full-fed train of menials
May howl above his ashes, as they did
Around him in his danger on the Oder,

Will no more stir a finger *now* than *then*.
Hence! hence! I must not hear your answer—look!
The stars are almost faded, and the gray
Begins to grizzle the black hair of night.
You shall not answer—Pardon me, that I
Am peremptory, 'tis your son that speaks,
Your long-lost, late-found son—Let's call my mother!
Softly and swiftly step, and leave the rest
To me; I'll answer for the event as far
As regards *you*, and that is the chief point,
As my first duty, which shall be observed.
We'll meet in Castle Siegendorf—once more
Our banners shall be glorious! Think of that
Alone, and leave all other thoughts to me,
Whose youth may better battle with them—Hence!
And may your age be happy!—I will kiss
My mother once more, then Heaven's speed be with you!

WERNER.

This counsel's safe—but is it honourable?

ULRIC.

To save a father is a child's chief honour.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A Gothic Hall in the Castle of Siegendorf, near Prague.

Enter ERIC *and* HENRICK, *retainers of the Count.*

ERIC.

So, better times are come at last; to these
Old walls new masters and high wassail, both
A long desideratum.

HENRICK.

Yes, for *masters*,
It might be unto those who long for novelty,
Though made by a new grave: but as for wassail,
Methinks the old Count Siegendorf maintain'd
His feudal hospitality as high
As e'er another prince of the empire.

ERIC.

Why,
For the mere cup and trencher, we no doubt
Fared passing well; but as for merriment

And sport, without which salt and sauces season
The cheer but scantily, our sizings were
Even of the narrowest.

HENRICK.

The old count loved not
The roar of revel; are you sure that *this* does?

ERIC.

As yet he hath been courteous as he's bounteous,
And we all love him.

HENRICK.

His reign is as yet
Hardly a year o'erpast its honey-moon,
And the first year of sovereigns is bridal;
Anon, we shall perceive his real sway
And moods of mind.

ERIC.

Pray heaven he keep the present!
Then his brave son, Count Ulric—there's a knight!
Pity the wars are o'er!

HENRICK.

Why so?

ERIC.

Look on him!
And answer that yourself.

HENRICK.

He's very youthful,
And strong and beautiful as a young tiger.

ERIC.

That's not a faithful vassal's likeness.

HENRICK.

But
Perhaps a true one.

ERIC.

Pity, as I said,
The wars are over: in the hall, who like
Count Ulric for a well-supported pride,
Which awes but yet offends not? in the field,
Who like him with his spear in hand, when, gnashing
His tusks, and ripping up from right to left
The howling hounds, the boar makes for the thicket?
Who backs a horse, or bears a hawk, or wears
A sword like him? Whose plume nods knightlier?

HENRICK.

No one's, I grant you: do not fear, if war
Be long in coming, he is of that kind

Will make it for himself, if he hath not
Already done as much.

ERIC.

What do you mean?

HENRICK.

You can't deny his train of followers
(But few our fellow native vassals born
On the domain) are such a sort of knaves
As——(*pauses*)

ERIC.

What?

HENRICK.

The war (you love so much) leaves living;
Like other Parents, She spoils her worst children.

ERIC.

Nonsense! they are all brave iron-visaged fellows,
Such as old Tilly loved.

HENRICK.

And who loved Tilly?
Ask that at Magdebourgh—or for that matter
Wallenstein either—they are gone to——

ERIC.

Rest;
But what beyond, 'tis not ours to pronounce.

HENRICK.

I wish they had left us something of their rest:
The country (nominally now at peace)
Is overrun with—God knows who—they fly
By night, and dissappear with sunrise; but
Leave no less desolation, nay, even more
Than the most *open* warfare.

ERIC.

But Count Ulric—
What has all this to do with him?

HENRICK.

With *him!*
He——might prevent it. As you say he's fond
Of war, why makes he it not on those marauders?

ERIC.

You'd better ask himself.

HENRICK.

I would as soon
Ask of the lion why he laps not milk.

ERIC.

And here he comes!

HENRICK.

The devil! you'll hold your tongue?

ERIC.

Why do you turn so pale?

HENRICK.

'Tis nothing—but

Be silent!

ERIC.

I will upon what you have said.

HENRICK.

I assure you I meant nothing, a mere sport
Of words, no more; besides, had it been otherwise,
He is to espouse the gentle baronness
Ida of Stralenheim, the late baron's heiress,
And she no doubt will soften whatsoever
Of fierceness the late long intestine wars
Have given all natures, and most unto those
Who were born in them, and bred up upon
The knees of Homicide; sprinkled, as it were,
With blood even at their baptism. Prithee, peace,
On all that I have said!

Enter ULRIC *and* RODOLPH.

Good morrow, count!

ULRIC.

Good morrow, worthy Henrick. Eric, is
All ready for the chase?

ERIC.

The dogs are order'd
Down to the forest, and the vassals out
To beat the bushes, and the day looks promising.
Shall I call forth your excellency's suite?
What courser will you please to mount?

ULRIC.

The dun,
Walstein.

ERIC.

I fear he scarcely has recover'd
The toils of Monday: 'twas a noble chase,
You spear'd *four* with your own hand.

ULRIC.

True, good Eric,
I had forgotten—let it be the gray, then,
Old Ziska: he has not been out this fortnight.

ERIC.

He shall be strait caparison'd. How many
Of your immediate retainers shall
Escort you?

ULRIC.

I leave that to Weilburgh, our
Master of the horse. [*Exit* ERIC.
Rodolph!

RODOLPH.

My lord!

ULRIC.

The news
Is awkward from the—(RODOLPH *points to* HENRICK)
How now, Henrick, why
Loiter you here?

HENRICK.

For your commands, my lord.

ULRIC.

Go to my father, and present my duty,
And learn if he would aught with me before
I mount. [*Exit* HENRICK.
Rodolph, our friends have had a check
Upon the frontiers of Franconia, and
'Tis rumour'd that the column sent against them
Is to be strengthen'd. I must join them soon.

RODOLPH.

Best wait for further and more sure advices.

ULRIC.

I mean it—and indeed it could not well
Have fallen out at a time more opposite
To all my plans.

RODOLPH.

It will be difficult
To excuse your absence to the Count, your father.

ULRIC.

Yes, but the unsettled state of our domain
In High Silesia will permit and cover
My journey. In the mean time, when we are
Engaged in the chase, draw off the eighty men
Whom Wolffe leads—keep the forests on your route:
You know it well?

RODOLPH.

As well as on that night
When we——

ULRIC.

We will not speak of that until
We can repeat the same with like success;
And when you have join'd, give Rosenberg this letter. [*Gives a letter.*
Add further, that I have sent this slight addition

To our force with you and Wolffe, as herald of
My coming, though I could but spare them ill
At this time, as my father loves to keep
Full numbers of retainers round the castle,
Until this marriage, and its feasts and fooleries,
Are rung out with its peal of nuptial nonsense.

RODOLPH.

I thought you loved the lady Ida?

ULRIC.

Why,
I do so—but it follows not from that
I would bind in my youth and glorious years,
So brief and burning, with a lady's zone,
Although 'twere that of Venus;—but I love her,
As woman should be loved, fairly and solely.

RODOLPH.

And constantly?

ULRIC.

I think so; for I love
Nought else.—But I have not the time to pause
Upon these gewgaws of the heart. Great things
We have to do ere long. Speed! Speed! good
Rodolph!

RODOLPH.

On my return, however, I shall find
The Baroness Ida lost in Countess Siegendorf?

ULRIC.

Perhaps: my father wishes it, and sooth
'Tis no bad policy; this union with
The last bud of the rival branch at once
Unites the future and destroys the past.

RODOLPH.

Adieu!

ULRIC.

Yet hold—we had better keep together
Until the chase begins; then draw thou off,
And do as I have said.

RODOLPH.

I will. But to
Return—'twas a most kind act in the count,
Your father, to send up to Konigsberg
For this fair orphan of the baron, and
To hail her as his daughter.

ULRIC.

Wondrous kind!
Especially as little kindness till
Then grew between them.

RODOLPH.

The late baron died
Of a fever, did he not?

ULRIC.

How should I know?

RODOLPH.

I have heard it whisper'd there was something strange
About his death—and even the place of it
Is scarcely known.

ULRIC.

Some obscure village on
The Saxon or Silesian frontier.

RODOLPH.

He
Has left no testament—no farewell words?

ULRIC.

I am neither confessor nor notary,
So cannot say.

RODOLPH.

Ah! here's the lady Ida.

Enter IDA STRALENHEIM.

ULRIC.

You are early, my sweet cousin!

IDA.

Not *too* early,
Dear Ulric, if I do not interrupt you.
Why do you call me "*cousin?*"

ULRIC (*smiling*).

Are we not so?

IDA.

Yes, but I do not like the name; methinks
It sounds so cold, as if you thought upon
Our pedigree, and only weigh'd our blood.

ULRIC (*starting*).

Blood!

IDA.

Why does yours start from your cheeks?

ULRIC.

Ay! doth it?

IDA.

It doth—but no! it rushes like a torrent
Even to your brow again.

ULRIC (*recovering himself*).

And if it fled,
It only was because your presence sent it
Back to my heart, which beats for you, sweet cousin!

IDA.

"Cousin" again.

ULRIC.

Nay, then I'll call you sister.

IDA.

I like that name still worse—would we had ne'er
Been aught of kindred!

ULRIC (*gloomily*).

Would we never had!

IDA.

Oh heaven! and can *you wish that?*

ULRIC.

Dearest Ida!
Did I not echo your own wish?

IDA.

Yes, Ulric,
But then I wish'd it not with such a glance,
And scarce knew what I said; but let me be
Sister, or cousin, what you will, so that
I still to you am something.

ULRIC.

You shall be
All—all——

IDA.

And you to *me are* so already;
But I can wait.

ULRIC.

Dear Ida!

IDA.

Call me Ida,
Your Ida, for I would be yours, none else's—
Indeed I have none else left, since my poor father—
[*She pauses.*

ULRIC.

You have *mine*—you have *me*.

IDA.

Dear Ulric, how I wish
My father could but view our happiness,
Which wants but this!

ULRIC.

Indeed!

IDA.

You would have loved him,
He you; for the brave ever love each other:
His manner was a little cold, his spirit
Proud (as is birth's prerogative), but under

This grave exterior—would you had known each other!
Had such as you been near him on his journey,
He had not died without a friend to soothe
His last and lonely moments.

ULRIC.

Who says *that?*

IDA.

What?

ULRIC.

That he *died alone.*

IDA.

The general rumour,
And disappearance of his servants, who
Have ne'er return'd: that fever was most deadly
Which swept them all away.

ULRIC.

If they were near him,
He could not die neglected or alone.

IDA.

Alas! what is a menial to a death-bed,
When the dim eye rolls vainly round for what
It loves?—they say he died of a fever.

ULRIC.

Say!

It *was* so.

IDA.

I sometimes dream otherwise.

ULRIC.

All dreams are false.

IDA.

And yet I see him as

I see you.

ULRIC.

Where?

IDA.

In sleep—I see him lie

Pale, bleeding, and a man with a raised knife

Beside him.

ULRIC.

But you do not see his *face?*

IDA (*looking at him*).

No! oh, my God! do *you?*

ULRIC.

Why do you ask?

IDA.

Because you look as if you saw a murderer!

ULRIC (*agitatedly*).

Ida, this is mere childishness; your weakness
Infects me, to my shame; but as all feelings
Of yours are common to me, it affects me.
Prithee, sweet child, change—

IDA.

Child, indeed! I have
Full fifteen summers! [*A bugle sounds.*

RODOLPH.

Hark, my lord, the bugle!

IDA (*peevishly to* RODOLPH).

Why need you tell him that? Can he not hear it
Without your echo?

RODOLPH.

Pardon me, fair baroness!

IDA.

I will not pardon you, unless you earn it
By aiding me in my dissuasion of
Count Ulric from the chase to-day.

RODOLPH.

You will not,
Lady, need aid of mine.

ULRIC.

I must not now
Forego it.

IDA.

But you shall!

ULRIC.

Shall!

IDA.

Yes, or be
No true knight.—Come, dear Ulric! yield to me
In this, for this one day; the day looks heavy,
And you are turn'd so pale and ill.

ULRIC.

You jest.

IDA.

Indeed I do not: ask of Rodolph.

RODOLPH.

Truly,
My lord, within this quarter of an hour
You have changed more than I e'er saw you change
In years.

ULRIC.

'Tis nothing; but if 'twere, the air
Would soon restore me. I'm the true cameleon,
And live but on the atmosphere; your feasts
In castle halls, and social banquets, nurse not
My spirit—I'm a forester and breather

Of the steep mountain-tops, where I love all
The eagle loves.

IDA.

Except his prey, I hope.

ULRIC.

Sweet Ida, wish me a fair chase, and I
Will bring you six boars' heads for trophies home.

IDA.

And will you not stay, then? You shall not go!
Come! I will sing to you.

ULRIC.

Ida, you scarcely
Will make a soldier's wife.

IDA.

I do not wish
To be so; for I trust these wars are over,
And you will live in peace on your domains.

Enter WERNER *as* COUNT SIEGENDORF.

ULRIC.

My father, I salute you, and it grieves me
With such brief greeting.—You have heard our bugle;
The vassals wait.

SIEGENDORF.

So let them—you forget
To-morrow is the appointed festival
In Prague, for peace restored. You are apt to follow
The chase with such an ardour as will scarce
Permit you to return to-day, or if
Return'd, too much fatigued to join to-morrow
The nobles in our marshall'd ranks.

ULRIC.

You, Count,
Will well supply the place of both—I am not
A lover of these pageantries.

SIEGENDORF.

No, Ulric;
It were not well that you alone of all
Our young nobility——

IDA.

And far the noblest
In aspect and demeanour.

SIEGENDORF (*to* IDA).

True, dear child,
Though somewhat frankly said for a fair damsel.—
But, Ulric, recollect too our position,

So lately re-instated in our honours.
Believe me, 'twould be mark'd in any house,
But most in *ours*, that ONE should be found wanting
At such a time and place. Besides, the Heaven
Which gave us back our own, in the same moment
It spread its Peace o'er all, hath double claims
On us for thanksgiving; first, for our country,
And next, that we are here to share its blessings.

ULRIC (*aside*).

Devout, too! Well, sir, I obey at once.
(*Then aloud to a servant.*)
Ludwig, dismiss the train without!

[*Exit* LUDWIG.

IDA.

And so
You yield at once to him what I for hours
Might supplicate in vain.

SIEGENDORF (*smiling*).

You are not jealous
Of me, I trust, my pretty Rebel! who
Would sanction disobedience against all
Except thyself? But fear not, thou shalt rule him
Hereafter with a fonder sway and firmer.

IDA.

But I should like to govern *now*.

SIEGENDORF.

You shall,
Your *harp;* which by the way awaits you with
The countess in her chamber. She complains
That you are a sad truant to your music:
She attends you.

IDA.

Then good morrow, my kind kinsmen!
Ulric, you'll come and hear me?

ULRIC.

By and by.

IDA.

Be sure I'll sound it better than your bugles;
Then pray you be as punctual to its notes:
I'll play you King Gustavus' march.

ULRIC.

And why not
Old Tilly's?

IDA.

Not that monster's! I should think
My harp-strings rang with groans, and not with
music,

Could aught of *his* sound on it;—but come quickly;
Your mother will be eager to receive you.

[*Exit* IDA.

SIEGENDORF.

Ulric, I wish to speak with you alone.

ULRIC.

My time's your vassal.— (*Aside to* RODOLPH.)
Rodolph, hence! and do
As I directed; and by his best speed
And readiest means let Rosenberg reply.

RODOLPH.

Count Siegendorf, command you aught? I am bound
Upon a journey past the frontier.

SIEGENDORF (*starts*).

Ah!—
Where? on *what* frontier?

RODOLPH.

The Silesian, on
My way—(*aside to* ULRIC.) *Where* shall I say?

ULRIC (*aside to* RODOLPH).

To Hamburgh.
(*Aside to himself.*) That

Word will I think put a firm padlock on
His further inquisition.

RODOLPH.

Count, to Hamburgh.

SIEGENDORF (*agitated*).

Hamburgh! no, I have nought to do there, nor
Am aught connected with that city. Then
God speed you!

RODOLPH.

Fare ye well, Count Siegendorf!

[*Exit* RODOLPH.

SIEGENDORF.

Ulric, this man, who has just departed, is
One of those strange companions, whom I fain
Would reason with you on.

ULRIC.

My lord, he is
Noble by birth, of one of the first houses
In Saxony.

SIEGENDORF.

I talk not of his birth,
But of his bearing. Men speak lightly of him.

ULRIC.

So they will do of most men. Even the monarch

Is not fenced from his chamberlain's slander, or
The sneer of the last courtier whom he has made
Great and ungrateful.

SIEGENDORF.

If I must be plain,
The world speaks more than lightly of this Rodolph;
They say he is leagued with the "black bands" who still
Ravage the frontier.

ULRIC.

And will you believe
The world?

SIEGENDORF.

In this case—yes.

ULRIC.

In *any* case,
I thought you knew it better than to take
An accusation for a sentence.

SIEGENDORF.

Son!
I understand you: you refer to——but
My destiny has so involved about me
Her spider web, that I can only flutter

Like the poor fly, but break it not. Take heed,
Ulric; you have seen to what the passions led me;
Twenty long years of misery and famine
Quench'd them not—twenty thousand more, perchance,
Hereafter (or even here in *moments* which
Might date for years, did Anguish make the dial),
May not obliterate or expiate
The madness and dishonour of an instant.
Ulric, be warn'd by a father!—I was not
By mine, and you behold me!

ULRIC.

I behold
The prosperous and beloved Siegendorf,
Lord of a prince's appanage, and honour'd
By those he rules, and those he ranks with.

SIEGENDORF.

Ah!
Why wilt thou call me prosperous, while I fear
For thee? Beloved, when thou lovest me not!
All hearts but one may beat in kindness for me—
But if my son's is cold!——

ULRIC.

Who *dare* say that?

SIEGENDORF.

None else but I, who see it—*feel* it—keener
Than would your adversary, who dared say so,
Your sabre in his heart! But mine survives
The wound.

ULRIC.

You err. My nature is not given
To outward fondling; how should it be so,
After twelve years' divorcement from my parents?

SIEGENDORF.

And did not *I* too pass those twelve torn years
In a like absence? But 'tis vain to urge you—
Nature was never call'd back by remonstrance.
Let's change the theme. I wish you to consider
That these young violent nobles of high name,
But dark deeds (ay, the darkest, if all Rumour
Reports be true), with whom thou consortest,
Will lead thee——

ULRIC (*impatiently*).

I'll be *led* by no man.

SIEGENDORF.

Nor
Be leader of such, I would hope: at once
To wean thee from the perils of thy youth

And haughty spirit, I have thought it well
That thou should'st wed the lady Ida—more,
As thou appear'st to love her.

ULRIC.

I have said
I will obey your orders, were they to
Unite with Hecate—can a son say more?

SIEGENDORF.

He says too much in saying this. It is not
The nature of thine age, nor of thy blood,
Nor of thy temperament, to talk so coolly,
Or act so carelessly, in that which is
The bloom or blight of all men's happiness
(For Glory's pillow is but restless if
Love lay not down his cheek there): some strong bias,
Some master fiend is in thy service to
Misrule the mortal who believes him slave,
And makes his every thought subservient; else
Thou'dst say at once, "I love young Ida, and
Will wed her," or, "I love her not, and all
The powers of earth shall never make me."—So
Would I have answer'd.

ULRIC.

Sir, *you wed* for love.

SIEGENDORF.

I did, and it has been my only refuge
In many miseries.

ULRIC.

Which miseries
Had never been but for this love-match.

SIEGENDORF.

Still
Against your age and nature! who at twenty
E'er answer'd thus till now?

ULRIC.

Did you not warn me
Against your own example?

SIEGENDORF.

Boyish sophist!
In a word, do you love, or love not, Ida?

ULRIC.

What matters it, if I am ready to
Obey you in espousing her?

SIEGENDORF.

As far
As you feel, nothing, but all life for her.

She's young—all-beautiful—adores you—is
Endow'd with qualities to give happiness,
Such as rounds common life into a dream
Of something which your poets cannot paint,
And (if it were not wisdom to love virtue)
For which Philosophy might barter Wisdom;
And giving so much happiness, deserves
A little in return. I would not have her
Break her heart for a man who has none to break,
Or wither on her stalk like some pale rose
Deserted by the bird she thought a nightingale,
According to the Orient tale. She is——

ULRIC.

The daughter of dead Stralenheim, your foe:
I'll wed her, ne'ertheless; though, to say truth,
Just now I am not violently transported
In favour of such unions.

SIEGENDORF.

But she loves you.

ULRIC.

And I love her, and therefore would think *twice*.

SIEGENDORF.

Alas! Love never *did* so.

ULRIC.

Then 'tis time
He should begin, and take the bandage from
His eyes, and look before he leaps: till now
He hath ta'en a jump i' the dark.

SIEGENDORF.

But you consent?

ULRIC.

I did and do.

SIEGENDORF.

Then fix the day.

ULRIC.

'Tis usual,
And, certes, courteous, to leave that to the lady.

SIEGENDORF.

I will engage for *her*.

ULRIC.

So will not *I*
For any woman; and as what I fix,
I fain would see unshaken, when she gives
Her answer, I'll give mine.

SIEGENDORF.

But 'tis your office
To woo.

ULRIC.

Count, 'tis a marriage of your making,
So be it of your wooing; but to please you
I will now pay my duty to my mother,
With whom, you know, the lady Ida is—
What would you have? You have forbid my stirring
For manly sports beyond the castle walls,
And I obey; you bid me turn a chamberer,
To pick up gloves, and fans, and knitting-needles,
And list to songs and tunes, and watch for smiles,
And smile at pretty prattle, and look into
The eyes of feminie, as though they were
The stars receding early to our wish
Upon the dawn of a world-winning battle—
What can a son or man do more? [*Exit* ULRIC.

SIEGENDORF (*solus*).

Too much!—
Too much of duty and too little love!
He pays me in the coin he owes me not:
For such hath been my wayward fate, I could not
Fulfil a parent's duties by his side
Till now; but love he owes me, for my thoughts
Ne'er left him, nor my eyes long'd without tears

To see my child again, and now I have found
him!
But how! obedient, but with coldness; duteous
In my sight, but with carelessness; mysterious,
Abstracted—distant—much given to long absence,
And where—none know—in league with the most
riotous
Of our young nobles; though, to do him justice,
He never stoops down to their vulgar pleasures;
Yet there's some tie between them which I cannot
Unravel. They look up to him—consult him—
Throng round him as a leader: but with me
He hath no confidence! Ah! can I hope it
After—what! doth my father's curse descend
Even to my child? Or is the Hungarian near
To shed more blood, or—oh! if it should be!
Spirit of Stralenheim, dost thou walk these walls
To wither him and his—who, though they slew
not,
Unlatch'd the door of death for thee? 'Twas not
Our fault, nor is our sin: thou wert our foe,
And yet I spared thee when my own Destruction
Slept with thee, to awake with thine awakening!
And only took—accursed Gold! thou liest

Like poison in my hands; I dare not use thee,
Nor part from thee; thou camest in such a guise,
Methinks thou wouldst contaminate all hands
Like mine. Yet I have done, to atone for thee,
Thou villanous Gold! and thy dead master's doom,
Though he died not by me or mine, as much
As if he were my brother! I have ta'en
His orphan Ida—cherish'd her as one
Who will be mine.

Enter an ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT.

The abbot, if it please
Your excellency, whom you sent for, waits
Upon you. [*Exit* ATTENDANT.

Enter the PRIOR ALBERT.

PRIOR ALBERT.

Peace be with these walls, and all
Within them!

SIEGENDORF.

Welcome, welcome, holy father!
And may thy prayer be heard!—all men have need
Of such, and I——

PRIOR ALBERT.

Have the first claim to all
The prayers of our community. Our convent,
Erected by your ancestors, is still
Protected by their children.

SIEGENDORF.

Yes, good father;
Continue daily orisons for us
In these dim days of heresies and blood,
Though the schismatic Swede, Gustavus, is
Gone home.

PRIOR ALBERT.

To the endless home of unbelievers,
Where there is everlasting wail and woe,
Gnashing of teeth, and tears of blood, and fire
Eternal, and the worm which dieth not!

SIEGENDORF.

True, father: and to avert those pangs from one,
Who, though of our most faultless, holy church,
Yet died without its last and dearest offices,
Which smoothe the soul through purgatorial pains,
I have to offer humbly this donation
In masses for his spirit.

[SIEGENDORF *offers the gold which he had taken from* STRALENHEIM.

PRIOR ALBERT.

Count, if I
Receive it, 'tis because I know too well
Refusal would offend you. Be assured
The largess shall be only dealt in alms,
And every mass no less sung for the dead.
Our house needs no donations, thanks to yours,
Which has of old endow'd it; but from you
And yours in all meet things 'tis fit we obey.
For whom shall mass be said?

SIEGENDORF (*faltering*).

For—for—the dead.

PRIOR ALBERT.

His name?

SIEGENDORF.

'Tis from a Soul, and not a Name,
I would avert perdition.

PRIOR ALBERT.

I meant not
To pry into your secret. We will pray
For one unknown, the same as for the proudest.

SIEGENDORF.

Secret! I have none; but, father, he who's gone
Might *have* one; or, in short, he did bequeath—

No, not bequeath—but I bestow this sum
For pious purposes.

PRIOR ALBERT.

A proper deed
In the behalf of our departed friends.

SIEGENDORF.

But he, who's gone, was not my friend, but foe,
The deadliest and the staunchest.

PRIOR ALBERT.

Better still!
To employ our means to obtain heaven for the souls
Of our dead enemies, is worthy those
Who can forgive them living.

SIEGENDORF.

But I did not
Forgive this man. I loathed him to the last,
As he did me. I do not love him now,
But——

PRIOR ALBERT.

Best of all! for this is pure religion!
You fain would rescue him you hate from hell—
An evangelical compassion!—with
Your own gold too!

SIEGENDORF.

Father, 'tis not my gold.

PRIOR ALBERT.

Whose then? you said it was no legacy.

SIEGENDORF.

No matter whose—of this be sure, that he
Who own'd it never more will need it, save
In that which it may purchase from your altars:
'Tis yours, or theirs.

PRIOR ALBERT.

Is there no blood upon it?

SIEGENDORF.

No: but there's worse than blood—eternal shame!

PRIOR ALBERT.

Did he who own'd it die in his *bed?*

SIEGENDORF.

Alas!
He did.

PRIOR ALBERT.

Son! you relapse into revenge,
If you regret your enemy's bloodless death.

SIEGENDORF.

His death was fathomlessly deep in blood.

PRIOR ALBERT.

You said he died in his bed, not battle.

SIEGENDORF.

He
Died, I scarce know—but—he was stabb'd i' the dark,
And now you have it—perish'd on his pillow
By a cut-throat!—ay!—you may look upon me!
I am *not* the man. I'll meet your eye on that point,
As I can one day God's.

PRIOR ALBERT.

Nor did he die
By means, or men, or instrument of yours?

SIEGENDORF.

No! by the God who sees and strikes!

PRIOR ALBERT.

Nor know you
Who slew him?

SIEGENDORF.

I could only guess at *one*,
And he to me a stranger, unconnected,
As unemploy'd. Except by one day's knowledge,
I never saw the man who was suspected.

PRIOR ALBERT.

Then you are free from guilt.

SIEGENDORF (*eagerly*).

Oh! *am* I?—say!

PRIOR ALBERT.

You have said so, and know best.

SIEGENDORF.

Father! I have spoken
The truth, and nought but truth, if *not* the *whole:*
Yet say I am *not* guilty! for the blood
Of this man weighs on me, as if I shed it,
Though by the Power who abhorreth human blood,
I did not!—nay, once spared it, when I might
And *could*—ay, perhaps, *should* (if our Self-Safety
Be e'er excusable in such defences
Against the attacks of over-potent foes);
But pray for him, for me, and all my house;
For, as I said, though I be innocent,
I know not why, a like Remorse is on me
As if he had fallen by me or mine. Pray for me,
Father! I have pray'd myself in vain.

PRIOR ALBERT.

I will.

Be comforted! You are innocent, and should
Be calm as Innocence.

SIEGENDORF.

But Calmness is not
Always the attribute of Innocence:
I feel it is not.

PRIOR ALBERT.

But it will be so,
When the mind gathers up its truth within it.
Remember the great festival to-morrow,
In which you rank amidst our chiefest nobles,
As well as your brave son; and smoothe your aspect;
Nor in the general orison of thanks
For bloodshed stopt, let blood, you shed not, rise
A cloud upon your thoughts. This were to be
Too sensitive. Take comfort, and forget
Such things, and leave Remorse unto the guilty.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

A large and magnificent Gothic Hall in the Castle of Siegendorf, decorated with Trophies, Banners, and Arms of that Family.

Enter ARNHEIM *and* MEISTER, *Attendants of* COUNT SIEGENDORF.

ARNHEIM.

Be quick! the count will soon return: the ladies
Already are at the portal. Have you sent
The messengers in search of him he seeks for?

MEISTER.

I have, in all directions, over Prague,
As far as the man's dress and figure could
By your description track him. The devil take
These revels and processions! All the pleasure
(If such there be) must fall to the spectators.
I'm sure none doth to us who make the show.

ARNHEIM.

Go to! my lady countess comes.

MEISTER.

I'd rather
Ride a day's hunting on an outworn jade,
Than follow in the train of a great man
In these dull pageantries.

ARNHEIM.

Begone! and rail
Within. [*Exeunt.*

Enter the COUNTESS JOSEPHINE SIEGENDORF *and* IDA STRALENHEIM.

JOSEPHINE.

Well, Heaven be praised, the show is over!

IDA.

How can you say so! Never have I dreamt
Of aught so beautiful. The flowers, the boughs,
The banners, and the nobles, and the knights,
The gems, the robes, the plumes, the happy faces,
The coursers, and the incense, and the sun
Streaming through the stain'd windows, even the *tombs*,
Which look'd so calm, and the celestial hymns,
Which seem'd as if they rather came from heaven
Than mounted there. The bursting organ's peal

Rolling on high like an harmonious thunder;
The white robes, and the lifted eyes; the world
At peace! and all at peace with one another!
Oh, my sweet mother! [*Embracing* JOSEPHINE.

JOSEPHINE.

My beloved child!
For such, I trust, thou shalt be shortly.

IDA.

Oh!
I am so already. Feel how my heart beats!

JOSEPHINE.

It does, my love; and never may it throb
With aught more bitter!

IDA.

Never shall it do so!
How should it? What should make us grieve? I hate
To hear of sorrow: how can we be sad,
Who love each other so entirely? You,
The Count, and Ulric, and your daughter, Ida.

JOSEPHINE.

Poor child!

IDA.

Do you pity me?

JOSEPHINE.

No; I but envy,
And that in sorrow, not in the world's sense
Of the universal vice, if one vice be
More general than another.

IDA.

I'll not hear
A word against a world which still contains
You and my Ulric. Did you ever see
Aught like him? How he tower'd amongst them all!
How all eyes follow'd him? The flowers fell faster—
Rain'd from each lattice at his feet, methought,
Than before all the rest, and where he trod
I dare be sworn that they grow still, nor e'er
Will wither.

JOSEPHINE.

You will spoil him, little flatterer,
If he should hear you.

IDA.

But he never will.
I dare not say so much to him—I fear him.

JOSEPHINE.

Why so? he loves you well.

IDA.

But I can never
Shape my thoughts *of* him into words *to* him.
Besides, he sometimes frightens me.

JOSEPHINE.

How so?

IDA.

A cloud comes o'er his blue eyes suddenly,
Yet he says nothing.

JOSEPHINE.

It is nothing: all men,
Especially in these dark troublous times,
Have much to think of.

IDA.

But I cannot think
Of aught save him.

JOSEPHINE.

Yet there are other men,
In the world's eye, as goodly. There's, for instance,
The young Count Waldorf, who scarce once withdrew
His eyes from yours to-day.

IDA.

I did not see him,
But Ulric. Did you not see at the moment
When all knelt, and I wept? and yet methought
Through my fast tears, though they were thick and warm,
I saw him smiling on me.

JOSEPHINE.

I could not
See aught save Heaven, to which my eyes were raised
Together with the people's.

IDA.

I thought too
Of Heaven, although I look'd on Ulric.

JOSEPHINE.

Come,
Let us retire; they will be here anon
Expectant of the banquet. We will lay
Aside these nodding plumes and dragging trains.

IDA.

And, above all, these stiff and heavy jewels,
Which make my head and heart ache, as both throb

Beneath their glitter o'er my brow and zone.
Dear mother, I am with you. [*Exeunt.*

Enter COUNT SIEGENDORF, *in full dress, from the solemnity, and* LUDWIG.

SIEGENDORF.

Is he not found?

LUDWIG.

Strict search is making every where; and if
The man be in Prague, be sure he will be found.

SIEGENDORF.

Where's Ulric?

LUDWIG.

He rode round the other way
With some young nobles; but he left them soon;
And, if I err not, not a minute since
I heard his Excellency, with his train,
Gallop o'er the West drawbridge.

Enter ULRIC, *splendidly dressed.*

SIEGENDORF (*to* LUDWIG).

See they cease not

Their quest of him I have described. (*Exit* LUDWIG.) Oh! Ulric,
How have I long'd for thee!

ULRIC.

Your wish is granted—
Behold me!

SIEGENDORF.

I have seen the murderer.

ULRIC.

Whom? Where?

SIEGENDORF.

The Hungarian, who slew Stralenheim.

ULRIC.

You dream.

SIEGENDORF.

I live! and as I live, I saw him—
Heard him! He dared to utter even my name.

ULRIC.

What name?

SIEGENDORF.

Werner! *'twas* mine.

ULRIC.

It must be so
No more: forget it.

SIEGENDORF.

Never! never! all
My destinies were woven in that name:
It will not be engraved upon my tomb,
But it may lead me there.

ULRIC.

To the point—the Hungarian?

SIEGENDORF.

Listen!—The church was throng'd; the hymn was raised;
"*Te Deum*" peal'd from Nations, rather than
From choirs, in one great cry of "God be praised"
For one day's peace, after thrice ten dread years,
Each bloodier than the former: I arose,
With all the nobles, and as I look'd down
Along the lines of lifted faces,—from
Our banner'd and escutcheon'd gallery, I
Saw, like a flash of lightning (for I saw
A moment, and no more), what struck me sightless
To all else—the Hungarian's face; I grew
Sick; and when I recover'd from the mist
Which curl'd about my senses, and again
Look'd down, I saw him not. The thanksgiving
Was over, and we march'd back in procession.

ULRIC.

Continue.

SIEGENDORF.

When we reach'd the Muldau's bridge,
The joyous crowd above, the numberless
Barks mann'd with revellers in their best garbs,
Which shot along the glancing tide below,
The decorated street, the long array,
The clashing music, and the thundering
Of far artillery, which seem'd to bid
A long and loud farewell to its great doings,
The standards o'er me, and the tramplings round,
The roar of rushing thousands, all—all could not
Chase this man from my mind; although my senses
No longer held him palpable.

ULRIC.

You saw him
No more, then?

SIEGENDORF.

I look'd, as a dying soldier
Looks at a draught of water, for this man;
But still I saw him not; but in his stead—

ULRIC.

What in his stead?

SIEGENDORF.

My eye for ever fell
Upon your dancing crest; the loftiest,
As on the loftiest and the loveliest head
It rose the highest of the stream of plumes,
Which overflow'd the glittering streets of Prague.

ULRIC.

What's this to the Hungarian?

SIEGENDORF.

Much; for I
Had almost then forgot him in my son,
When just as the artillery ceased, and paused
The Music, and the crowd embraced in lieu
Of shouting, I heard in a deep, low voice,
Distinct and keener far upon my ear
Than the late Cannon's Volume, this word—
"*Werner!*"

ULRIC.

Uttered by——

SIEGENDORF.

HIM! I turn'd—and saw—and fell.

ULRIC.

And wherefore? Were you seen?

SIEGENDORF.

The officious care
Of those around me dragg'd me from the spot,
Seeing my faintness, ignorant of the cause;
You, too, were too remote in the procession
(The old nobles being divided from their children)
To aid me.

ULRIC.

But I'll aid you now.

SIEGENDORF.

In what?

ULRIC.

In searching for this man, or——When he's found,
What shall we do with him?

SIEGENDORF.

I know not that.

ULRIC.

Then wherefore seek?

SIEGENDORF.

Because I cannot rest
Till he is found. His fate, and Stralenheim's,

And ours, seem intertwisted; nor can be
Unravell'd, till——

Enter an ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT.

A stranger, to wait on
Your Excellency.

SIEGENDORF.

Who?

ATTENDANT.

He gave no name.

SIEGENDORF.

Admit him, ne'ertheless.

[*The* ATTENDANT *introduces* GABOR, *and afterwards exit.*

Ah!

GABOR.

'Tis, then, Werner!

SIEGENDORF (*haughtily*).

The same you knew, Sir, by that name; and *you!*

GABOR (*looking round*).

I recognise you both; father and son,
It seems. Count, I have heard that you, or yours,
Have lately been in search of me: I am here.

SIEGENDORF.

I have sought you, and have found you; you are charged
(Your own heart may inform you why) with such
A crime as—— [*He pauses.*

GABOR.

Give it utterance, and then
I'll meet the consequences.

SIEGENDORF.

You shall do so—
Unless——

GABOR.

First, who accuses me?

SIEGENDORF.

All things,
If not all men: the universal rumour—
My own presence on the spot—the place—the time—
And every speck of circumstance unite
To fix the blot on you.

GABOR.

And on *me only?*
Pause ere you answer: Is no other name,
Save mine, stain'd in this business?

SIEGENDORF.

Trifling villain!
Who play'st with thine own guilt! Of all that breathe
Thou best dost know the innocence of him
'Gainst whom thy breath would blow thy bloody slander.
But I will talk no further with a wretch,
Further than Justice asks. Answer at once,
And without quibbling, to my charge.

GABOR.

'Tis false!

SIEGENDORF.

Who says so?

GABOR.

I.

SIEGENDORF.

And how disprove it?

GABOR.

By
The presence of the murderer.

SIEGENDORF.

Name him!

GABOR.

He
May have more names than one. Your lordship had so
Once on a time.

SIEGENDORF.

If you mean me, I dare
Your utmost.

GABOR.

You may do so, and in safety;
I know the assassin.

SIEGENDORF.

Where is he?

GABOR (*pointing to* ULRIC).

Beside you!

[ULRIC *rushes forward to attack* GABOR; SIEGENDORF *interposes.*

SIEGENDORF.

Liar and fiend! but you shall not be slain;
These walls are mine, and you are safe within them.
[*He turns to* ULRIC.
Ulric, repel this calumny, as I
Will do. I avow it is a growth so monstrous,

I could not deem it earth-born: but, be calm;
It will refute itself. But touch him not.

[ULRIC *endeavours to compose himself.*

GABOR.

Look at *him*, count, and then *hear me.*

SIEGENDORF (*first to* GABOR, *and then looking at* ULRIC).

I hear thee.

My God! you look——

ULRIC.

How?

SIEGENDORF.

As on that dread night
When we met in the garden.

ULRIC (*composes himself*).

It is nothing.

GABOR.

Count, you are bound to hear me. I came hither
Not seeking you, but sought. When I knelt down
Amidst the People in the Church, I dream'd not
To find the beggar'd Werner in the seat
Of Senators and Princes; but you have call'd me,
And we have met.

SIEGENDORF.

Go on, sir,

GABOR.

Ere I do so,

Allow me to inquire who profited
By Stralenheim's death? Was't I—as poor as ever;
And poorer by Suspicion on my name.
The Baron lost in that last outrage neither
Jewels nor gold; his life alone was sought,—
A life which stood between the claims of others
To honours and estates, scarce less than princely.

SIEGENDORF.

These hints, as vague as vain, attach no less
To me than to my son.

GABOR.

I can't help that.
But let the consequence alight on him
Who feels himself the guilty one amongst us.
I speak to you, Count Siegendorf, because
I know you innocent, and deem you just.
But ere I can proceed—*Dare* you protect me!—
Dare you command me?

[SIEGENDORF *first looks at the Hungarian, then at* ULRIC, *who has unbuckled his sabi*

and is drawing lines with it on the floor—still in its sheath.

ULRIC (*looks at his father and says*)

Let the man go on!

GABOR.

I am unarm'd, count—bid your son lay down
His sabre.

ULRIC (*offers it to him contemptuously*).

Take it.

GABOR.

No, sir, 'tis enough
That we are both unarm'd—I would not choose
To wear a steel which may be stain'd with more
Blood than came there in battle.

ULRIC (*casts the sabre from him in contempt*).

It—or some
Such other weapon, in my hands—spared yours
Once, when disarm'd and at my mercy.

GABOR.

True—
I have not forgotten it: you spared me for
Your own especial purpose—to sustain
An ignominy not my own.

ULRIC.

Proceed.
The tale is doubtless worthy the relater.
But is it of my father to hear further?

[*To* SIEGENDORF.

SIEGENDORF (*takes his son by the hand*).

My son! I know mine own innocence—and doubt not
Of yours—but I have promised this man patience;
Let him continue.

GABOR.

I will not detain you
By speaking of myself much; I began
Life early—and am what the world has made me.
At Frankfort, on the Oder, where I pass'd
A winter in obscurity, it was
My chance at several places of resort
(Which I frequented sometimes, but not often)
To hear related a strange circumstance,
In February last. A martial force,
Sent by the state, had, after strong resistance,
Secured a band of desperate men, supposed
Marauders from the hostile camp.—They proved,
However, not to be so—but banditti,

Whom either accident or enterprise
Had carried from their usual haunt—the forests
Which skirt Bohemia—even into Lusatia.
Many amongst them were reported of
High rank—and martial law slept for a time.
At last they were escorted o'er the frontiers,
And placed beneath the civil jurisdiction
Of the free town of Frankfort. Of *their* fate,
I know no more.

SIEGENDORF.

And what is this to Ulric?

GABOR.

Amongst them there was said to be one man
Of wonderful endowments:—birth and fortune,
Youth, strength, and beauty, almost superhuman,
And courage as unrivalled, were proclaim'd
His by the public rumour; and his sway,
Not only over his associates but
His judges, was attributed to witchcraft.
Such was his influence:—I have no great faith
In any Magic save that of the Mine—
I therefore deem'd him wealthy.—But my Soul
Was roused with various feelings to seek out
This Prodigy, if only to behold him.

SIEGENDORF.

And did you so?

GABOR.

You'll hear. Chance favour'd me:
A popular affray in the public square
Drew crowds together—it was one of those
Occasions, where men's souls look out of them,
And show them as they are—even in their faces:
The moment my eye met his—I exclaim'd
"This is the man!" though he was then, as since,
With the nobles of the city. I felt sure
I had not err'd, and watch'd him long and nearly:
I noted down his form—his gesture—features,
Stature and bearing—and amidst them all,
'Midst every natural and acquired distinction,
I could discern, methought, the assassin's eye
And gladiator's heart.

ULRIC (*smiling*).

The tale sounds well.

GABOR.

And may sound better.—He appear'd to me
One of those beings to whom Fortune bends
As she doth to the Daring—and on whom
The Fates of others oft depend; besides,

An indescribable sensation drew me
Near to this man, as if my Point of Fortune
Was to be fixed by him.—There I was wrong.

SIEGENDORF.

And may not be right now.

GABOR.

I follow'd him,
Solicited his notice—and obtain'd it—
Though not his friendship:—it was his intention
To leave the city privately—we left it
Together—and together we arrived
In the poor town where Werner was conceal'd,
And Stralenheim was succour'd——Now we are on
The verge—*dare* you hear further?

SIEGENDORF.

I must do so—
Or I have heard too much.

GABOR.

I saw in you
A man above his station—and if not
So high, as now I find you, in my then
Conceptions—'twas that I had rarely seen
Men such as you appear'd in height of mind,
In the most high of worldly rank; you were

Poor—even to all save rags—I would have shared
My purse, though slender, with you—you refused it.

SIEGENDORF.

Doth my refusal make a debt to you,
That thus you urge it?

GABOR.

Still you owe me something,
Though not for that—and I owed you my safety,
At least my seeming safety—when the slaves
Of Stralenheim pursued me on the grounds
That *I* had robb'd him.

SIEGENDORF.

I conceal'd you—I,
Whom, and whose house, you arraign, reviving viper!

GABOR.

I accuse no man—save in my defence.
You, count! have made yourself accuser—judge—
Your hall's my court, your heart is my tribunal.
Be just, and *I'll* be merciful.

SIEGENDORF.

You merciful!
You! Base calumniator!

GABOR.

I. 'Twill rest
With me at last to be so. You conceal'd me—
In secret passages known to yourself,
You said, and to none else. At dead of night,
Weary with watching in the dark, and dubious
Of tracing back my way—I saw a glimmer
Through distant crannies of a twinkling light.
I follow'd it, and reach'd a door—a secret
Portal—which open'd to the chamber, where,
With cautious hand and slow, having first undone
As much as made a crevice of the fastening,
I look'd through, and beheld a purple bed,
And on it Stralenheim!—

SIEGENDORF.

Asleep! And yet
You slew him—Wretch!

GABOR.

He was already slain,
And bleeding like a Sacrifice. My own
Blood became ice.

SIEGENDORF.

But he was all alone!

You saw none else? You did not see the——

[*He pauses from agitation.*

GABOR.

No,

He, whom you dare not name—nor even I
Scarce dare to recollect—was not then in
The chamber.

SIEGENDORF (*to* ULRIC).

Then, my boy! thou art guiltless still—
Thou bad'st me say *I* was so once—Oh! now
Do thou as much!

GABOR.

Be patient! I can *not*
Recede now, though it shake the very walls
Which frown above us. You remember, or
If not, your son does,—that the locks were changed
Beneath *his* chief inspection—on the morn
Which led to this same night: how he had enter'd,
He best knows—but within an antechamber,
The door of which was half ajar—I saw
A man who wash'd his bloody hands, and oft
With stern and anxious glance gazed back upon
The bleeding body—but it moved no more.

SIEGENDORF.

Oh! God of Fathers!

GABOR.

I beheld his features
As I see yours—but yours they were not, though
Resembling them—behold them in Count Ulric's!
Distinct—as I beheld them—though the expression
Is not now what it then was;—but it was so
When I first charged him with the crime:—so lately.

SIEGENDORF.

This is so——

GABOR (*interrupting him*).

Nay—but hear me to the end!
Now you must do so.—I conceived myself
Betray'd by you and *him* (for now I saw
There was some tie between you) into this
Pretended den of refuge, to become
The victim of your guilt; and my first thought
Was vengeance: but though arm'd with a short poignard
(Having left my sword without) I was no match
For him at any time, as had been proved
That morning—either in address or force.

I turn'd, and fled—i' the dark: Chance, rather than
Skill, made me gain the secret door of the hall,
And thence the chamber where you slept—if I
Had found you *waking*, Heaven alone can tell
What Vengeance and Suspicion might have prompted;
But ne'er slept Guilt as Werner slept that night.

SIEGENDORF.

And yet I had horrid dreams! and such brief sleep—
The stars had not gone down when I awoke—
Why didst thou spare me? I dreamt of my father—
And now my dream is out!

GABOR.

'Tis not my fault,
If I have read it.—Well! I fled and hid me—
Chance led me here after so many moons—
And show'd me Werner in Count Siegendorf!
Werner, whom I had sought in huts in vain,
Inhabited the palace of a Sovereign!
You sought me, and have found me—now you know
My secret, and may weigh its worth.

SIEGENDORF (*after a pause*).

Indeed!

GABOR.

Is it Revenge or Justice which inspires
Your meditation?

SIEGENDORF.

Neither—I was weighing
The value of your secret.

GABOR.

You shall know it
At once—when you were poor, and I, though poor,
Rich enough to relieve such poverty
As might have envied mine, I offer'd you
My purse—you would not share it:—I'll be franker
With you; you are wealthy, noble, trusted by
The Imperial powers—You understand me?

SIEGENDORF.

Yes.—

GABOR.

Not quite. You think me venal, and scarce true:
'Tis no less true, however, that my fortunes
Have made me both at present; you shall aid me,
I would have aided you—and also have

Been somewhat damaged in my name to save
Yours and your son's. Weigh well what I have said.

SIEGENDORF.

Dare you await the event of a few minutes'
Deliberation?

GABOR (*casts his eyes on* ULRIC, *who is leaning against a pillar*).

If I should do so?

SIEGENDORF.

I pledge my life for yours. Withdraw into
This tower. [*Opens a turret door.*

GABOR (*hesitatingly*).

This is the second *safe* asylum
You have offer'd me.

SIEGENDORF.

And was not the first so?

GABOR.

I know not that even now—but will approve
The second. I have still a further shield.—
I did not enter Prague alone—and should I
Be put to rest with Stralenheim—there are
Some tongues without will wag in my behalf.
Be brief in your decision!

SIEGENDORF.

I will be so.—
My word is sacred and irrevocable
Within *these* walls, but it extends no further.

GABOR.

I'll take it for so much.

SIEGENDORF (*points to* ULRIC'S *sabre, still upon the ground*).

Take also *that*—
I saw you eye it eagerly, and him
Distrustfully.

GABOR (*takes up the sabre*).

I will; and so provide
To sell my life—not cheaply.

[GABOR *goes into the turret, which* SIEGENDORF *closes.*

SIEGENDORF (*advances to* ULRIC).

Now, Count Ulric!
For son I dare not call thee—What say'st thou?

ULRIC.

His tale is true.

SIEGENDORF.

True, monster!

ULRIC.

Most true, father;
And you did well to listen to it: what
We know, we can provide against. He must
Be silenced.

SIEGENDORF.

Ay, with half of my domains;
And with the other half, could he and thou
Unsay this villany.

ULRIC.

It is no time
For trifling or dissembling. I have said
His story's true; and he too must be silenced.

SIEGENDORF.

How so?

ULRIC.

As Stralenheim is. Are you so dull
As never to have hit on this before?
When we met in the garden, what except
Discovery in the act could make me know
His death? Or had the prince's household been
Then summon'd, would the cry for the police
Been left to such a stranger? Or should I
Have loiter'd on the way? Or could *you, Werner,*

The object of the baron's hate and fears,
Have fled—unless by many an hour before
Suspicion woke? I sought and fathom'd you—
Doubting if you were false or feeble; I
Perceived you were the latter; and yet so
Confiding have I found you, that I doubted
At times your weakness.

SIEGENDORF.

Parricide! no less
Than common stabber! What deed of my life,
Or thought of mine, could make you deem me fit
For your accomplice?

ULRIC.

Father, do not raise
The devil you cannot lay, between us. This
Is time for union and for action, not
For family disputes. While *you* were tortured
Could *I* be calm? Think you that I have heard
This fellow's tale without some feeling? you
Have taught me feeling for *you* and myself;
For whom or what else did you ever teach it?

SIEGENDORF.

Oh! my dead father's curse! 'tis working now.

ULRIC.

Let it work on! the grave will keep it down!
Ashes are feeble foes: it is more easy
To baffle such, than countermine a mole,
Which winds its blind but living path beneath
you.
Yet hear me still!—If *you* condemn me, yet
Remember *who* hath taught me once too often
To listen to him! *Who* proclaim'd to me
That *there were crimes* made venial by the occasion?
That passion was our nature? that the goods
Of heaven waited on the goods of fortune?
Who show'd me his humanity secured
By his *nerves* only? *Who* deprived me of
All power to vindicate myself and race
In open day? By his disgrace which stamp'd
(It might be) bastardy on me, and on
Himself—a *felon's* brand! The man who is
At once both warm and weak, invites to deeds
He longs to do, but dare not. Is it strange
That I should *act* what you could *think?* We have
done
With right and wrong; and now must only ponder
Upon effects, not causes. Stralenheim,

Whose life I saved, from impulse, as, *unknown*,
I would have saved a peasant's or a dog's, I slew,
Known as our foe—but not from vengeance. He
Was a rock in our way, which I cut through,
As doth the bolt, because it stood between us
And our true destination—but not idly.
As stranger I preserved him, and he *owed me*
His *life;* when due, I but resumed the debt.
He, you, and I stood o'er a gulf, wherein
I have plunged our enemy. *You* kindled first
The torch—*you* show'd the path: now trace me that
Of safety—or let me!

SIEGENDORF.

I have done with life!

ULRIC.

Let us have done with that which cankers life—
Familiar feuds and vain recriminations
Of things which cannot be undone. We have
No more to learn or hide: I know no fear,
And have within these very walls men whom
(Although you know them not) dare venture all things.
You stand high with the state; what passes here

Will not excite her too great curiosity:
Keep your own secret, keep a steady eye,
Stir not, and speak not;—leave the rest to me:
We must have no *third* babblers thrust between us.

[*Exit* ULRIC.

SIEGENDORF (*solus*).

Am I awake? are these my father's halls?
And *yon*—my son? *My* son! *mine!* who have ever
Abhorr'd both mystery and blood, and yet
Am plunged into the deepest hell of both!
I must be speedy, or more will be shed—
The Hungarian's!—Ulric—he hath partisans,
It seems: I might have guess'd as much. Oh fool!
Wolves prowl in company. He hath the key
(As I too) of the opposite door which leads
Into the turret. Now then! or once more
To be the father of fresh crimes—no less
Than of the criminal! Ho! Gabor! Gabor!

[*Exit into the turret, closing the door after him.*

SCENE II.

The Interior of the Turret.

GABOR *and* SIEGENDORF.

GABOR.

Who calls?

SIEGENDORF.

I—Siegendorf! Take these, and fly!
Lose not a moment!

[*Tears off a diamond star and other jewels, and thrusts them into* GABOR'S *hand.*

GABOR.

What am I to do
With these?

SIEGENDORF.

Whate'er you will: sell them, or hoard,
And prosper; but delay not—or you are lost!

GABOR.

You pledged your honour for my safety!

SIEGENDORF.

And
Must thus redeem it. Fly! I am not master,

It seems, of my own castle—of my own
Retainers—nay, even of these very walls,
Or I would bid them fall and crush me! Fly!
Or you will be slain by——

GABOR.

Is it even so?
Farewell, then! Recollect, however, count,
You sought this fatal interview!

SIEGENDORF.

I did:
Let it not be more fatal still:—Begone!

GABOR.

By the same path I enter'd?

SIEGENDORF.

Yes; that's safe still:
But loiter not in Prague;—you do not know
With whom you have to deal.

GABOR.

I know too well—
And knew it ere yourself, unhappy sire!
Farewell! [*Exit* GABOR.

SIEGENDORF (*solus and listening*).

He hath clear'd the staircase. Ah! I hear

The door sound loud behind him! He is safe!
Safe!—Oh, my father's spirit!—I am faint——
[*He leans down upon a stone seat, near the wall of the Tower, in a drooping posture.*

Enter ULRIC, *with others armed, and with weapons drawn.*

ULRIC.

Despatch!—he's there!

LUDWIG.

The count, my lord!

ULRIC (*recognising* SIEGENDORF).

You here, sir!

SIEGENDORF.

Yes: if you want another victim, strike!

ULRIC (*seeing him stript of his jewels*).

Where is the ruffian who hath plunder'd you?
Vassals, despatch in search of him! You see
'Twas as I said—the wretch hath stript my father
Of jewels which might form a prince's heirloom!
Away! I'll follow you forthwith.

[*Exeunt all but* SIEGENDORF *and* ULRIC.

What's this?
Where is the villain?

SIEGENDORF.

There are *two*, sir; which
Are you in quest of?

ULRIC.

Let us hear no more
Of this: he must be found. You have not let him
Escape?

SIEGENDORF.

He's gone.

ULRIC.

With your connivance?

SIEGENDORF.

With
My fullest, freest aid.

ULRIC.

Then fare you well!

[ULRIC *is going*.

SIEGENDORF.

Stop! I command—entreat—implore! Oh, Ulric!
Will you then leave me?

ULRIC.

What! remain to be
Denounced—dragg'd, it may be, in chains; and all
By your inherent weakness, half-humanity,

Selfish remorse, and temporising pity,
That sacrifices your whole race to save
A wretch to profit by our ruin! No, count,
Henceforth you have no son!

SIEGENDORF.

I never had one;
And would you ne'er had borne the useless name!
Where will you go? I would not send you forth
Without protection.

ULRIC.

Leave that unto me.
I am not alone; nor merely the vain heir
Of your domains: a thousand, ay, ten thousand
Swords, hearts, and hands, are mine.

SIEGENDORF.

The foresters!
With whom the Hungarian found you first at Frankfort?

ULRIC.

Yes—men—who are worthy of the name! Go tell
Your senators that they look well to Prague;
Their feast of peace was early for the times;
There are more spirits abroad than have been laid
With Wallenstein!

Enter JOSEPHINE *and* IDA.

JOSEPHINE.

What is't we hear? My Siegendorf!
Thank Heaven, I see you safe!

SIEGENDORF.

Safe!

IDA.

Yes, dear father!

SIEGENDORF.

No, no; I have no children: never more
Call me by that worst name of parent.

JOSEPHINE.

What
Means my good lord?

SIEGENDORF.

That you have given birth
To a demon!

IDA (*taking* ULRIC'S *hand*).

Who shall dare say this of Ulric?

SIEGENDORF.

Ida, beware! there's blood upon that hand.

IDA (*stooping to kiss it*).

I'd kiss it off, though it were mine!

SIEGENDORF.

It is so!

ULRIC.

Away! it is your father's! [*Exit* ULRIC.

IDA.

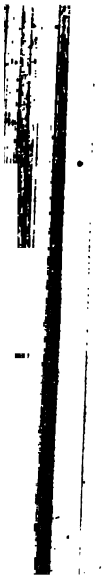
Oh, great God!
And I have loved this man!

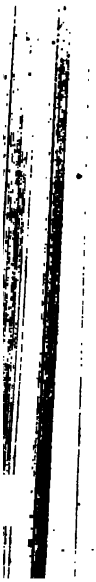
[IDA *falls senseless*—JOSEPHINE *stands speechless with horror.*

SIEGENDORF.

The wretch hath slain
Them both!—my Josephine! we are now alone!
Would we had ever been so!—All is over
For me!—Now open wide, my sire, thy grave;
Thy curse hath dug it deeper for thy son
In mine!—The race of Siegendorf is past!

THE END.





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